

# **Netaji** **Subhas Chandra**

**Part I—Political Philosophy of Netaji**

**Part II—History of Azad Hind Government**

**Part III—I. N. A. & International Law**

BY

**Jitendra Nath Chatterjee**





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# NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF NETAJI  
HISTORY OF AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT.  
I. N. A. AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

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# FOREWORD

## THE BOSE-GANDHI POLARITY

### IN INDIAN POLITICS

By Prof. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR, M. A., D.F. h. c.

The greatest Indian world-figure of today is "*Netaji*" (Commander) Subhas Bose.<sup>(1)</sup> Every other publicist, statesman, patriot and intellectual of India, howsoever creative or gifted, has dwindled into a pigmy. A need of the hour, then, is works relating to Bose's activities and ideologies.

Advocate Jiten Ghosh has asked me to write a foreword to his work. But I am neither a politician nor a party-man of any sort. The book, however, is lucid and clear enough for even the most non-political reader.

While writing these few lines I have before me Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India* published a few days ago (Calcutta, March 1946). In this extensive publication of 710 pages Nehru has of course not failed to deal with modern and contemporary India. But he has not a line about Bengali patriots and statesmen like Suren Bauerjee, Bipin Pal, Chittaranjan Das or Jatin Sen-Gupta. To Subhas Bose, however, he has two references. At one point (p. 508) Bose, the Ex-President of the Indian National Congress, is exhibited as being expelled from the Congress on account of his attacks on the Congress policy (1938-39) of allying itself with the British Empire in its anti-German, anti-Italian and anti-Japanese policies. The other reference to Bose describes his broadcasts in 1942 (p. 569) during World-War II from outside the British Empire as a political refugee. Through these broadcasts he was exhorting the Indian patriots within India to ally themselves with the enemies of England and emancipate Asia from albinocracy, the domination by white men. He was thereby functioning as a De Gaulle (1940-44) arming himself with Anglo-American help for the expulsion of Germans from

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(1) For Subhas Bose political ideologies see B. K. Sarkar : *Political Philosophies Since 1905* (Lahore 1942), II, Part I, pp. 221, 229, 264-268, 316 ; Part II, 358, 413, 445-447, 467. For "Chittaranjan Das and Young Asia" see *Ibid* (Madras, 1928), Vol. I, pp. 393-372. For other Indian publicists likewise see the two Volumes of the same book in four different Parts.

*Netaji* literally means *Führer*, *Duce*, *Leader*.

France. Another "recent" European predecessor of his in this game was the Czech patriot-statesman, Masaryk, who during World-War I (1914-18) escaped from his enslaved motherland and joined the enemies of the foreign ruler, Austria-Hungary.

In the first instance, Subhas is found to be too extremist and too radical for the conservative and moderate-minded Congressists such as are willing to work as agents of the British Empire in its affiliations, enmities and hatreds. In the second instance, he is an exponent of the expulsion by hook or by crook of Europeans and Americans as a politically dominant factor from Asia and Africa. He is utilizing *vishwa-shakti* (world-forces)<sup>(2)</sup> in the interest of India's emancipation from foreign rule.

It is interesting that Nehru's observations about Bose, although not sympathetic, agree, in the main, with the thesis of Ghosh as maintained in this large-sized study. The two aspects of Bose's foreign policy suggested in Nehru's statements about him may be said to be the backbone of the ideological analysis furnished by Ghosh.

It is pointed out in this book that whatever is pro-British happens according to Gandhism to be *ahimsa* (non-violence), justice and humanity (pp. 73-80). Hence Gandhism's enmity to the enemies of the British Empire, namely, Germany, Italy and Japan. In 1946 the unification and strengthening of Germany is turning out to be an imperial necessity of the British people, a powerful bulwark of the British Empire against Soviet Russia. It may be surmised, according to Ghosh's analysis, that perhaps Gandhism will from now on tend to be friendly to Germany. Germans may appear to be good boys in Gandhi's eyes. Japanese also are likely to rise in Gandhism's estimation because both England and America may consider a somewhat strong Japan to be a substantial politico-military ally against the expansion of Soviet Russia in Asia.

It may not be unthinkable, therefore, that anything 'anti-British, for instance, the present activities of Soviet Russia, may be dubbed tremendous violations of *ahimsa* by Gandhism. In

(2) For the doctrine of *vishwa-shakti* (world-forces) see the section on "International Politics and National Advancements in Modern Times" in B. K. Sarka *The Science of History and the Hope of Mankind* (London 1912), pp. 33-49. as well as Chapter I. in his *Politics of Boundaries* (Calcutta 1926, 1938).

Ghosh's analysis Subhas, the anti-British nationalist of India took advantage of anti-British forces wherever available in the past and may be expected to utilize them tomorrow, if need be, and if he should remain what he was. Germany, Japan and Italy were his allies yesterday. His ally of today is likely to be Soviet Russia in so far as it is the enemy of Imperialism. In his *Realpolitik* of freedom there is no communism, fascism, national-socialism, democracy, despotocracy, totalitarianism or the like of his allies and associates. For his foreign policy he does not indulge in sentimental reverence for the "storied windows" of some British buildings or maudlin sympathy with the chums of a particular country<sup>(3)</sup>. He is out for the emancipation of India, like De Valera for that of Ireland, from the British Empire. That is his only job and he goes to it in a hard-headed manner,—looking for alliance with the enemies of England here and there and everywhere.

In international law and political history, objectively considered, the defeats sustained by Subhas's Indian National Army at Kohima and in the Manipur Hills (Eastern India) from the Anglo-American forces (1944) belong to the same category as those sustained by another Bengali statesman-warrior, Mir Kasim, in the Rajmahal Hills near the Ganges in 1763. Subhas, as the ally of Germany, Italy and Japan against the Anglo-American enemies, is also on a par with Tipu Sultan of Mysore, *Citoyen Tipou*, the ally of Napoleon, against the British Empire (1799).

Liberal thinkers among British and American historians as well as statesmen may be expected to treat Subhas as but another George Washington that failed. Thus considered, he is likely to be appraised as one of the finest products of British Empire culture, who like Washington attempted to confer on Asia the liberties to which the English people is used by expelling the British rulers from India in the only manner which they understand to be reasonable and effective. It is the arbitrament of the sword, pure and undefiled, that he tried, and he failed. This is an undeniable reality of contemporary history and international

(3) For "The Foreign Policy of Young India" see B. K. Sarkar : *Sociology of Races, Cultures and Human Progress* (Calcutta, 1939), formerly known as *The Futurism of Young Asia* (Berlin, 1922) pp. 358-367.

relations. Nobody has need to be a politician or a partyman in order to understand this simple fact.

The failure of the Indian precursors of Subhas during World-War I (1914-18) has need to be recorded in this context. The world's historians of contemporary Asia will find valuable data about them in Rowlatt's *Report on Revolutionary Conspiracies in India* (Calcutta 1911) and *Freiheitskampf der indischen Nationalisten* (Berlin 1920) as about Subhas in this present work by Advocate Ghosh.

Floods of light have been thrown on the Bose-Gandhi polarity in this study. Ghosh's method is interesting. The usual biographical treatment is not his. He has taken up episodes in Subhas's career chronologically. In regard to each episode he has placed Subhas in the *milieu* of his colleagues, comrades and contemporaries both in India and abroad. It is these interhuman relations of Subhas that have been analyzed by Ghosh. We are presented with the behaviour patterns as well as their interpretations. The snapshots have turned out to be meaty sociological material. The author has delivered an effective study of a political personality. Part II, dealing with the Azad Hind Government is a contribution to contemporary political history. But, on the whole, the book will have its place in political and social science as the analysis of socio-cultural forces and socio-political processes.

Ghosh is the author of *Rashtriya Chinta-dhara* (1935), a book in Bengali on contemporary political philosophies. It appears that both there as well as in the present work he is used to the interpretations of Marxism, Fascism and National-socialism such as have been delivered in England and America by the enemies of Soviet Russia, Italy and Germany. He does not appear to have touched the views of the Russian, German and Italian peoples in regard to their respective rivals and enemies. This is perhaps why he is so anxious to prove that Subhas is neither a Marxist nor a Fascist nor a Nazi. Then, again, in regard to the alleged spirituality of the Indian people he takes the conventional view and ignores the materialistic, positive and rational achievements of the Hindus since Mohenjodarian and Vedic times.

The author has detected a Hindu atmosphere in Bankim Chatterjee's song *Bande Mataram* (Hail Motherland). The suggestion is palpably wrong. In this composition Chatterjee inspires



us with the destiny of "70 million" Bengalis, comprising as they did, the Assamese, Oriya and Hindi speaking men and women of Assam, Orissa and Bihar included in the Bengal Province of the nineteenth century. And of course those 70 millions comprised Muslims, Christians as well as Hindus. It is a purely "provincial", territorial, non-linguistic, non-ethnic and non-theocratic, i.e., secular hymn to the Motherland. The goddess here is none of the deities known in the *Vedas*, the *Puranas* and the *Tantras*, but something un-Hindu, against the tradition. She is a newly created divinity, the Motherland. The manufacture of a deity out of the motherland by Bankim is spiritually part and parcel of his faith in Comte's *philosophie positive*, the untheocratic, un-Christian and anti-Catholic religion of positivism, the deification of humanity and the cult of social service.<sup>(4)</sup>

"If there is any Durga or Durga anywhere in the universe," says Bankim in an irreligious, anti-Hindu, sceptical and rationalist vein, "It is Thou, O Motherland ! There is no other Durga" (*Tvam hi Durga*). The questions of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism are entirely irrelevant in the ecology of this national anthem.

The author is objective enough to give Gandhism its due (p. 24) and appreciates the socialistic propaganda of Nehru's *Whither India* ? But the fundamental thesis remains, namely, the eternal polarity<sup>(5)</sup> between Subhas the youngster and Gandhi the elder. This polarity is traced by Ghosh to the rude beginnings. The very inspiration of Subhas in 1921 when he is about 24 is independent of Gandhi and older than Gandhism. Subhas is demonstrated to be a child of the glorious Bengali revolution of 1905 and a *chela* of Vivekananda, whose dynamic patriotism and constructive social philosophy have been the veritable religion of Young Bengal since 1893.

An interesting viewpoint is furnished by Ghosh. We understand that Gandhi generally behaves as a moderate *vis-à-vis* Subhas the radical. Subhas's incompatibility with Gandhi is a

(4) For the contribution of Comte to the moral and political ideologies of Chatterjee see B. K. Sarkar: *Villages and Towns as Social Patterns* (Calcutta 1941) pp. 356-359.

(5) For "Subhas Bose vs. Gandhi (1941)" see *Ibid.*, pp. 636-647, 644-645.

permanent feature. And yet on certain occasions (pp. 56-57) Gandhi follows Subhas "belatedly". This pattern of interhuman relations is of course more than a merely Indian phenomenon.

The work of Ghosh about Subhas bids fair to be an eye-opener to Eur-American as well as Turkish, Iranian, Chinese, Japanese and other foreign students of modern India. British and American historians writing on Europe, ancient, medieval or modern, make it a point to furnish data and viewpoints from the French, German, Balkan, Baltic, Russian and other angles. Writing on contemporary history they do not run into the fallacy of treating the developments of Europe as the biography of a Churchill "writ large". Nor are they tempted to develop world-history into a Herculeanized Roosevelt. The avoidance of megalomania as an item in objective methodology has been lacking in the historians of the Indian nationalist movement. They have as a rule managed to overlook Bengali events and ideologies. To them 1921 is the year I of India's freedom activities. Everything pre-Gandhi is at a discount, and of course everything non-Gandhi or anti-Gandhi too,—since then. It should be desirable for the next generation of Indian historians interesting themselves in modern Indian affairs to cultivate objectivity and assimilate the American and British methods of historiography in regard to the diverse nooks and corners of India. They are not wrong who call India a subcontinent.

Some of these Indian facts and ideologies from the Bengali field of vision have been furnished by Ghosh in this study. The mania of seeing everything Indian thro' the eyes of Gandhi is as unscientific as that of examining Indian attitudes, drives and urges through the eyes of British Governors and the leaders of Indian political parties, as is being done by the Pethick-Lawrence Mission at the present moment. There are more things in heaven and earth than are embodied in Gandhi, the Indian Civil Service, or the prosperous political leaders who are the representatives of birth and bullion oligarchies among Hindus, Muslims and others.<sup>(\*)</sup> They have been much too long in lime-light to be able

(\*) For the actual political situation in India see B. K. Sarkar : *Indian Freedom Movement*, which is the Preface to Professor Abdus Sadeque's *Indian Constitutional Tangle* (Calcutta, 1940).

to furnish anything new to honest observers and realistic surveyors of the political situation.

The author quotes Holland, Sidgwick, Burgess, Willoughby, Garner and other writers of school-texts on politics in order to demonstrate that Azad Hind is a state (pp. 125-127). Strictly speaking, one should know that such discussions are irrelevant. A rebellion or revolution or war is justified only if it is successful. It does not require school-masters to prove that a state is in existence when it has made its appearance by the might of its sword and by annihilating its enemies. And if the rebellion or war fails, the victors or the powers that be appoint their own judges in order to prove to their own satisfaction that the enemies were criminals and devils or that the rebels were miserable wretches. This has been the tradition of international law and law-courts through the ages. It is nothing but the fiat of the sword that jurists understand. Nothing succeeds like success. Justifiers of *fait accompli* and "prescription" are legion. The victor in a war is the viceroi of God, nay, God Himself, on earth. Gods and Churches are always found to be on the side of "Quislings" and "war-criminals", when they happen to be successful.

Those who do not possess the sword must submit. There is no special virtue in their submissionism. Nor can it be regarded as a vice or a sin in a categorical manner. Non-violence must be the deliberate and deeprooted strategy of unarmed, disarmed, or poorly armed peoples. Even "the Marshal of France", Petain, as a slave of Germany, had to practise non-violence for good many years (1940-44). Once in a while "Quit India" may be formulated when the chances of expelling the foreigners with foreign aid become practical politics and are perhaps within sight. During those periods the violence (*himsa*) activities of millions of people are alleged to be eclipsed, or expiated by the *ahimsa* (non-violence) philosophy of an isolated Hercules of the spiritualitarian brand. Advocate Ghosh perhaps does injustice to Ganhisim<sup>(1)</sup> when he remains impervious to expediency or the relativity of virtues,—which accounts for a great deal of apparent inconsistencies in the camp of Subhas Bose's Indian opponents.

• May be, he has his reasons. But I am not a publicist and have

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(1) For "The Eternal in Gandhi" see B. K. Sarkar: *Creative India* (Lahore, 1937), pp. 559-570.

no political affiliations. It is possible for me, a layman, to see the facts and arguments on the side of Gandhism.

The German state has been annihilated (May 1945). Germans are today slaves of England, U. S. A., France and Russia. Under these circumstances even Göring, Hess, Ribbentrop and Schacht, the *avatars* of militarism and war as "a categorical imperative", may be caught somewhere worshipping in the temple of non-violence. Every German today in each of the four enslaved Germanies is likely to be a double-dealer, a relativist in morality,—while practising *ahimsa*. It was during Poincaré's occupation of the Ruhr Valley in 1923 that Germans resorted to *den passiven Widerstand* (passive resistance) against France. At that time, within five years of World-War I., their arms were not powerful enough, or perhaps they did not consider it expedient to exhibit their arms prematurely. Petain likewise was an ardent "*collaborateur*" with Hitler as long as Hitler was the Emperor of Europe and master of France (1940-44). So also Subhas, when he comes back to British India, will inevitably join the non-violent crowd and be in good company with the apostles of morality, humanity and justice. In course of time Advocate Ghosh may perhaps get acculturated to such political inconsistencies, double-dealings, hypocrisies and relativities as the norm of *Realpolitik*.

In the ecology of an unarmed people even the elementary measures for the revision of an Act relating to constitution and administration are senselessly overemphasized as meaning the alleged end of foreign rule. The metaphysical pattern of *ahimsa* (non-violence) is capable of such inflation in phraseology. This is the inevitable political psychology of industrially and techno-militarily ill-equipped persons. They are compelled to remain content with whatever they can wring out of unwilling hands at the moment,—while perpetually praying for the involvement of the latter in another life and death struggle in World-War III.

Bose's Indian National Army belongs in international law and diplomatic politics to the same category as Masaryk's Czechoslovak Army fighting for England, France and Russia during World-War I (1914-18) against Austria-Hungary. It was not possible for Austria-Hungary, vanquished as she was, to catch

hold of the rebels Masaryk and his army as traitors, "Quislings" and what not, and try them in a court of law at Vienna. Hence the question of the status of Masaryk and his army in international or municipal law did not arise. But Bose's Army and his allies have been defeated in open war. It is out of place under these conditions to quote, as Advocate Ghosh does (pp. 175-178), Lawrence, Oppenheim and other international jurists against the British Power. There is nobody anywhere on earth for the time being to challenge or dispute the legal, political and military authority of this Power *vis-à-vis* these "criminals". The only possible appeal can now be not to law but to morality, perhaps also to clemency.

The author has concentrated his attention on Bose. But the concentration, as has been suggested above, is not of a biographical or historical scale. It does not take note of the complex movements of Bose's colleagues and opponents or the diverse activities of the hero himself. Bose's work in Europe is almost entirely out of the picture. We are told nothing of his *Indian Struggle* or Bengali works. Readers might also feel that the Gandhistic personalities have likewise been somewhat overlooked. These limitations are the limitations of the author's method. He has not attempted the all-sweeping, comprehensive and hemispheroidal canvas of Shakespearean drama. He has focussed his effort on some of the memorable incidents, the critical events, the "crises" in the career of his hero. His analysis is concentrated on certain phases, episodes or moments of Bose's struggle. He has, as in Racine's tragedies, based as they are on the "unities", simplified each scene to the utmost and introduced as few characters as possible.

We encounter here nothing but a number of snapshots in the series of intense moments constituting the twenty-five year old tug of war between Bose and Gandhi. The antithesis has been exhibited in the boldest manner conceivable. Those who are not partisans but happen to be objective observers will find in Ghosh's analysis an important socio-ideological fact of Indian political evolution since 1911. To world-historians of the last quarter of a century this record will be valuable as a document of conflicting tendencies.

Calcutta, 8rd April 1946



**PART I**

**POLITICAL**

**PHILOSOPHY OF NETAJI**

**"Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God"**



# NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA

## POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF NETAJI

### THE CHILD OF RENAISSANCE

(Netaji was born on January 23rd, 1897.) He came in at the end of a great Renaissance in India and inherited its rich legacy of Nationalism.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Britain was, slowly but surely, spreading her snares for the cultural conquest of India. Lord Macaulay had conceived of a plan for the creation of a new nation in India who would be English in everything except in race. The seeds of his sinister design were sown in the English system of Education introduced by the noble Lord. A class of Anglicised Indians grew up in no time who began to think, to talk, to dress and to eat as Englishmen. The Soul of Bengal revolted against this insidious move to effect the Cultural conquest of India. In 1828, Raja Rammohan Roy, the very first "Youth" of modern India, rebelled against the indiscriminate importation of everything English into India and initiated a cultural movement through the 'Brahmo Samaj'—a New order of the Hindus—which ultimately grew into a powerful movement for an all-round Renaissance. The spirit of the Renaissance, later on, found expression through Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen in Bengal, Swami Dayananda Saraswati in North-Western India, Justice M. G. Ranade and Shri G. K. Gokhale in Western India and the Theosophical Society in South India. And, India, rising out of her slumber, saw the dangers of a foreign rule, and made a violent attempt to free herself in 1857, the result being the "Sepoy Mutiny" in India.

In the eighties of the last century, the country revived from the shock of the "strong rule" which followed the Sepoy Mutiny. The Renaissance movement took a new turn in the hands of Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa. He was a saint divinely inspired and he found a solution of the conflict between Orthodox

Hinduism and the religious ideas of the Renaissance. He absorbed in his cult the best elements in the different currents of religious thought and drew into his fold the devout people in the society. The Political resurgence, of which the Sepoy Mutiny was the first symptom, also underwent a new orientation and turned towards constitutionalism, and, in 1885, the Indian National Congress was born. The two streams—one religio-cultural and the other political—merged into one when Swami Vivekananda, the great Disciple of Sri Ramkrishna effected a further synthesis between Religion and Nationalism and made "Patriotism" and "Service to the People" the central tenets of his Gospel. Unfortunately for India, no such reawakening took place in the Muslim Community of the time and the natural result of this want of an all-round Renaissance was the one-sided development of Indian Nationalism.

It was during the days of Swami Vivekananda that a child was born in the luxuriant home of the Public Prosecutor at Cuttack in Orissa and the parents fondly called him Subhas—"the Sweet-tongued". Little could the parents then realise that a time will come, during their own life-time, when the whole of India will hang on the voice of Subhas. As the boy grew into years he felt possessed by the spirit of Swami Vivekananda. He was sent to the European Protestant School at Cuttack for receiving his early education. There is no authentic account of how he fared at this school.) But the sentiments expressed through a letter from Cambridge in 1919 wherein he said—"I feel most happy when I see white people serve me and brush my shoes"—speak a volume about the humiliations which Boy-Subhas had to undergo as an Indian in an European School. There can be no doubt that the roots of his intense hatred for the white people can be traced back to his days in this school. It was the same sense of resentment against the arrogance of the white people which led him to organise the sound thrashing of Mr. C. F. Oaten, a professor of the Presidency College, for his insulting attitude to the Indian students. (Nationalism was the most dominant trait of his character and if that Nationalism were a little harsh towards the British, the reason for it must be found in the conduct of the haughty little "Sahibs" in the European School. Truly had the poet said "Child is the father of the man.")

## HIS MISSION

At the tender age of thirteen, the teachings of Swami Vivekananda raised in Subhas a conflict with materialism. Unlike other boys, from the dawn of his consciousness, he took life very seriously. The Divine spell had cast its influence over him and, unostentatiously he practised Yoga and prepared himself for self-renunciation. The superfluities of his home oppressed him heavily and the thought of millions less fortunate than himself haunted him day and night. The sufferings of the world were crying for a redress from him and in search of the way to end the sorrows of humanity, he braved the dark dangers of an unknown way and reached the caves of the Himalayas. In the biting cold of winter nights in the Himalayas, the boy Sannyasin, then barely seventeen years old, felt warmed up by the sight of a kind, divine light and made for his lonely way in search of a Guru who could guide him in seeking by his own renunciation the salvation of humanity. For six long months he almost shared the caves with the beasts of the jungle and defied all fears of death, or rather, death itself. But, instead of finding a "Guru", he found out all the debauchery and corruption, which hide themselves comfortably under the cloak of religion in the Hindu shrines and temples. He was completely disillusioned and returned home a wiser boy. He offered no explanation of his conduct to anybody and wrote to a friend "it did not matter in the least what other people might think of me". It was about this time that he grew conscious of a mission in his life. As he himself wrote in a letter :—"I have been realizing day by day that I have got a definite mission in my life and for that I am bearing the body and I am not to drift in the current of popular opinion. People will speak well or ill—this is the way of the world—but my sublime consciousness consists in this that I am not moved by it."

This training in pursuing the dictates of his own conscience laid the foundation of his Himalayan personality and, like the peak of the Himalayas, he kept his head erect and braved all storms when others had succumbed or yielded, with or without a protest. His persecutors ought to have known that all the weapons of torture—all the "Belsen methods" put

together could not inflict more suffering than what he himself had courted by his renunciation in boyhood. His political opponents had sought to penalise him by isolating him from the rest of his co-workers. But how could they succeed in making him more lonely than what he chose to be, when he renounced his home in search of a way for the fulfilment of his own mission. In politics, as in other spheres of his life, he was capable of marching alone and cared not either the favour or the frown of the crowd. In his public life, if he was always in the crowd, it was because the people loved him. He was in the crowd and for the crowd; but he was never of the crowd. In his college life, he was rusticated from the Calcutta University for the Oaten incident; and in his later life, he was expelled from the Indian National Congress of which he was then the twice elected President. But so-called disciplinary measures like rustication and expulsion were matters of little consequence to him.

With first class Honours in Philosophy, he graduated from the Calcutta University. It was the study of philosophy which made him a thorough-bred Rationalist. His mind could give no recognition to anything which baffled rational explanation. This rationalism brought him in conflict with the cloud of mysticism that hung round Indian politics in 1921, when he came back from London.

In an attempt to formulate the political philosophy of Netaji, we are bound to consider his role in Indian politics vis-a-vis Gandhiji. Most of the presentday top-rank leaders of the Indian National Congress have had their inspiration in politics from Gandhiji and were drawn into the vortex of public life by his magnetic personality. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shri Rajendra Prasad, Shri Rajagopalachariar were the shining lights of the different Bars in India and even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was working his way to success in the Bar under the leadership of his father Pandit Motilal Nehru. With young Subhas it was quite different. He was bent on non-co-operation with the British Government long before the non-co-operation movement was conceived by its author. He had, in his own mind, chalked out a career of service to the people even before Gandhiji had actively joined the Congress in India. As

early as in 1915, he was conscious of a definite mission in life, and, in 1919, he felt quite sure that in the event of his success in the I. C. S. examination, he would lose the very ideal of his life. He appeared at the I. C. S. examination to please his father and resigned from the service to fulfil the mission of his life. What was that mission—that ideal—which was so vitally opposed to the acceptance of service under the Crown? It could not be anything other than the attainment of freedom by complete non-co-operation with the alien government ruling over India. As he himself had said, “it would be impossible to serve both masters at the same time—namely, the British Government and my country”, and so, he resigned to have a free hand to serve his motherland. Thus, in 1919, when loyal Gandhiji was pleading in the Amritsar Session of the Congress for co-operation with the British, the rebel in Subhas Chandra was planning for the realisation of the mission of his life through non-co-operation with the British Government. It was, therefore, easier for the other leaders of the Congress to give their blind obedience to Gandhiji—their political Guru than it was for Shri Subhas Chandra whose political life was solely inspired by his own conscious ideal. With regard to the fundamentals of his political belief, no compromise was possible. He had put too much of his own self in politics to allow him to accept anything which he could not rationally explain. His opposition to Gandhiji had antagonised many otherwise admirable men, but did they care to find out how very different from their own was Subhas Chandra’s mainspring of politics? Great was Gandhiji to him, but greater still was his own conscience.

While in England, the Sinn Fein movement of Ireland made a deep impression on his mind. The Sinn Fein party convinced him of the immense power which an organised and conscious minority could wield in politics. During the Great War of 1914, De Valera, the leader of the Sinn Fein Party, opposed the measure of Home Rule conceded by the British Parliament and in co-operation with Germany organised the Dublin uprising in 1916 and proclaimed the Irish Republic. The Sinn Feinners were left-wingers in Irish politics, who accepted nothing short of “Complete Independence” as their goal and, though handful in number, adopted all possible tactics to flare up a movement of

resistance to British Imperialism. Shri Subhas Chandra had studied the history of successful revolutions in the world and under the influence of history, he became a stern realist in politics. Indeed, it was this historical method of his approach to politics that made him free from the charms of political utopia. In revolution he found the only purgative to the many evils of a diseased political order and found no instance of a revolution having been led by the majority in the country. Like all revolutionary leaders, he directed his mind to the organisation and control of a conscious minority—the left-wingers in politics.

### THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

The atmosphere of Cambridge, where he obtained a degree in Mental and Moral Tripos, enlarged that intellectual freedom which was a trait of his mind from his childhood. With a mind so bent towards rationalism, he returned to India in 1921. The Non-Co-Operation Movement was just then started with Gandhiji at the helm of this great nationalist struggle. Shri Subhas Chandra was in his schools when the "Swadeshi Movement" was started in Bengal. The mantram of "Bande-Mataram" had touched his heart but he waited for being baptized with fire. In the Non-Co-Operation Movement he sought that baptism and immediately after his arrival at Bombay, he hurried to Gandhiji to obtain a clear understanding of the details—the successive stages of his plan, leading on step by step to the ultimate seizure of power from the bureaucracy.

This interview between Gandhiji, who was then at the pinnacle of his glory—a Mahatma—and this young fresher from Cambridge must be marked as the starting point of a conflict between two ideologies in Indian politics. Gandhiji's over-emphasis on "Truth", "Virtue", "Justice", "Love" and "Ahimsa" bewildered Shri Subhas Chandra, who had not come prepared for such a poetic and philosophical discourse on the political problems of India. He knew of Gandhiji's non-violent method of warfare and even acknowledged its relative merit in the existing circumstances of India. It was not the policy of non-violence that was in question, but the political outlook of the leader, his deductive method of reasoning from abstract philosophic conceptions and assumed data, his tendency to combine politics and ethics, his irrational

and inexplicable faith, namely, that Swraj would be won within one year—all of which only helped to make confusion worse confounded. "We are surely going to get Swaraj before the year is out. If you ask me, how we are going to win it; I cannot answer. But we are going to win it all the same"—said Gandhiji at the time. As an art of making men just, virtuous and patriotic, Gandhian politics was superb, but Subhas Chandra wanted the policy that would make India free. He was like a Machiavelli without his vices and compared to him Gandhiji was as antique and utopian as Plato. Gandhiji's replies to Shri Subhas Chandra's incisive questions—firstly, how were the activities conducted by the Congress, going to culminate in the last stage of the campaign, namely, the non-payment of taxes; secondly, how could mere non-payment of taxes or Civil Disobedience force the government to retire from the field and leave us with our freedom; thirdly, how could Gandhiji promise Swaraj within one year—seemed to him rather confused and outside the bounds of practical politics. Recording his own impression of this first interview Shri Subhas Chandra said "my reason told me clearly, again and again, that there was a deplorable lack of clarity in the plan which the Mahatma had formulated and that he himself did not have a clear idea of the campaign which would bring India to her cherished goal of freedom." As years rolled on, the Gandhian political doctrines came to be more and more crystallised into a philosophy of life and the differences between the idealist Gandhiji and the realist Subhas Chandra grew more and more acute.

#### HIS POLITICAL GURU

On his return to Calcutta, Shri Subhas Chandra met Deshabandhu C. R. Das, the leader of Bengal. In Deshabandhu Das he found his political Guru. Here was a leader, he acclaimed, who was "conscious of his exact role, namely, that of a practical politician." The Master and his Disciple appreciated the clear-thinking, the political instinct, the political tact and the realistic outlook of each other and while the disciple had implicit faith in the leader's unerring political wisdom, the latter, in his turn had emotion enough to share the hopes and aspirations of his youthful follower. Their union reminded Bengal of another

equally happy union referred to before—the union between Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda. In the politics of Deshabandhu Das, there was no taboo on diplomacy and the principle of “end justifying the means” was considered to be quite salutary and resorted to very frequently. Deshabandhu Das was no Savanorala trying to wrest political power by moral influence and he had the prudence to separate politics from ethics and religion altogether. In short, it may be said, that the politics of Deshabandhu Das was the matured expression of the political idealism which was in a nebulous state in the young disciple's mind. Shri Subhas Chandra accordingly decided to have his political training under Deshabandhu Das.

Unfortunately for India, the union did not last long. On June 16, 1925, Deshabandhu Das died when Shri Subhas Chandra was in detention in a far away Mandalay Prison in Burma. During the very short period of their association which was interrupted by two incarcerations—the first in the Company of the Deshabandhu and the second in October, 1924, under Reg. III of 1818—he had, under the direction of his leader served as the Principal of the National School in Calcutta, and then, as the Manager of ‘Forward’, the Swarajist daily of Calcutta and later on, as the Chief-Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation under the Mayoralty of Deshabandhu Das. The skill in organisation and the training in discipline which he had acquired as an officer of the University Infantry Corps also enabled him to have a large hand in the raising of a Volunteer Corps.

The death of Deshabandhu Das was a turning point in Shri Subhas Chandra's career. The disappearance of such a towering personality from the Indian politics led to the revival of Gandhism as a potent political force. After calling off the Non-Co-Operation Movement, Gandhiji wanted the people to spin-spin and spin, as khadi would bring independence for India. Shortly afterwards, he was arrested and imprisoned, and his followers would not allow even a coma to be added or altered to the programme of their Master. Passivity and fatalism were again tightening their grip on the Indian masses and political stagnation was visible everywhere. The Gandhites who styled themselves as No-changers refused to adjust the political programme of the Congress to the peculiar needs of the time. This orthodoxy was too much



for Deshabandhu Das and his followers, who, advocated a programme of uniform, continuous and consistent opposition to the government from within the council. This new tactics was calculated to keep up the spirit of resistance in the country and also to carry the message of the Congress to every home through election campaign. As Deshabandhu said, in a revolutionary fight, the points of vantage should not be left in the hands of the enemy. But, this simple rule of warfare was not acceptable to the Gandhi-ites and it was only because of Deshabandhu Das that Gandhiji waived his objection to Council-entry and ultimately decided to retire from politics. To Shri Subhas Chandra, therefore, the death of Deshabandhu Das was a colossal misfortune. He knew well how incompatible was his own political ideology with Gandhian politics. He reckoned the tremendous influence of Gandhiji over the massmind. That influence was no doubt an asset to the Indian National Congress though the concomitant liabilities were in no way small. Gandhiji demanded of the Congress a charter of liberty to carry on all kinds of pious political experiments and to hold back the development of India on modern scientific lines. Starting with passive resistance as a form of mass movement against oppression, injustice and governmental tyranny, he had already developed it into a Creed of Non-violence. One can understand the policy of non-violence as a novel technique of a mass movement. The Suffragist Movement in England would bear eloquent testimony to its grand efficacy. One can also understand his programme of "Satyagraha" as an effective measure of protest against an unlawful act of the government. The refusal of Hampden to pay the "tonnage" or the "ship-money" imposed by Charles I. without obtaining the sanction of the Parliament might be cited as one such example of successful "Satyagraha" in British history—though, even there, to depose King Charles, the force which sustained him to the throne had to be met by force. One can even concede to "Khadi" a place in the political programme and accept it as the badge of revolt against foreign rule and the "Charkha" as a means to inculcate in the people a sense of self-help and self-respect. But, what no modern mind can follow, is his zeal to mix up the things of the heart with political matters

and his overflowing Christian catholicity in political bargaining. In the absence of Deshabandhu Das, therefore, a breach between Gandhiji and Shri Subhas Chandra became inevitable.

### CONFLICT WITH GANDHI-ISM

(Shri Subhas Chandra, as a realist, had accepted non-violence as a matter of policy. He knew fully well that by sporadic acts of violence Britain could not be frightened and made to lose her Empire. But this non-violent fight, according to him, could be successful only if the leader had enough diplomacy to outwit the opponent and adequate steps were taken to organise world opinion by international propaganda. Even now, only timely non-violent mass movement can carry the country to its goal of freedom, but Gandhiji calculates time by the number of spinning wheels in the country. In his dealings with Britain he wants to be very friendly and cordial and also intends to set up a model of non-violent warfare by his magnanimity, open-mindedness, faith, hope and love. His political role is that of a leader of an enslaved India, but his ethical mission has made of him a world-preacher; and it is this duality which, according to Shri Subhas Chandra, constitutes the weakest point in his leadership.)

On his release from detention in May 1927, Shri Subhas Chandra was surprised to see the great proportion which the communal question had assumed in the political life of India. We have traced before how the political consciousness developed in India as an offshoot of the Socio-Cultural Movement, which in the last century, was confined to the Hindu-fold. The British government, cautioned by its mistake committed in relation to the Hindus, made no attempt to interfere with the social and cultural habits of the Muslims. On the contrary, after the Sepoy Mutiny, it bestowed its favours very profusely on the Muslim community and laid the foundation of its imperialist policy of "divide and rule." In the result, Indian Nationalism assumed a definite Hindu-Complexion of which Rishi Bankim Chandra's "Bande Mataram" might be cited as an example. The Hindu Nationalists, however, were anything but communalists, and, their footing in western education

helped them to build up a conception of Nationalism entirely divorced from Religion. For the first time, during the Anti-Partition Movement in Bengal, this Neo-Nationalism of India showed itself very markedly and communal differences were forgotten in the service of the motherland. In the Anti-Partition Movement, the Hindus and the Muslims joined hands to achieve one common objective, namely, the unsettling of the settled fact of partition, and, as they made no bargain with each other, they succeeded in reaching the goal. But, how very different were the approaches made by Gandhiji during the Non-co-operation Movement. He bargained with the Muslims for their co-operation and, instead of placing before them the common goal of independence for the common motherland, encouraged them to "do or die" for the Khalifa of Turkey. Deshabandhu Das was the first to realise the mischief done by such an alliance to the cause of Indian freedom. He, therefore, sought to hold before the Muslims of India the ideal of Indian Independence, and since the idea of bargaining had entered into Muslim politics, he wanted to kill the virus by entering into a final bargain with them. In 1932, Deshabandhu Das drew up a Hindu-Moslem pact by which he conceded certain minor constitutional safeguards to the Muslim minority and certain concessions in the matter of service, but the Coconada Congress had not the political wisdom to appreciate the value of timely concessions and rejected the pact on the ground of its pro-muslim leanings. This failure to accept this timely pact would one day go down to history as the genesis of the present day movement for Pakisthan. To the Congressmen at Coconada, no sacrifice was too great for Swaraj; but, unfortunately, this alleged partiality of the pact for the Muslims proved to be too great for their cause.

(Shri Subhas Chandra believed that a fighting programme would be an effective antidote to the growing communalism in India. The appointment of the Simon Commission, which was an All-White Commission, in November, 1927, convulsed the country with a sense of indignation. Here was an insult hurled by the British Parliament on all Indians, irrespective of their political views, caste, creed or community.) The Congress,

the Liberal party, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the All-India Trade Union and innumerable youths' and students' conferences passed resolutions condemning the appointment of the Simon Commission and urging its boycott. The Madras Congress gave the correct lead to the people by adopting complete national independence as the goal of the Indian National Congress; but it faltered thereafter, and failed to follow up this declaration by logical acts. (Shri Subhas Chandra found that an opportune moment had come to mobilise the countrywide resentment and to launch a struggle on the broad issue of India's "Right to Self-determination". He went up to Gandhiji's Ashram at Sabarmati and begged him to give a lead to the country. But, Gandhiji could then see no light.) He did not realise that the Hindu-Muslim unity, for want of which he could not feel hopeful about the prospects of a movement, could be attained more easily by courting common suffering and common sacrifice for redeeming the honour of India, which both according to the Hindus and the Muslims, was greatly compromised by the appointment of the 'Simon Commission, than by intermittent parleys and hair-splitting mathematics of communal representation in the legislature.' The appointment of the Simon Commission, made by virtue of Britain's right to determine the time and manner of India's constitutional advance, raised questions relating to the very fundamentals of Indian politics, namely, who should have the right to determine India's future form of Government,—India herself or England? ✓ The right to frame the constitution is one of the normal incidents of Sovereignty. The unanimous decision of all political parties and communities in India to boycott the Simon Commission was, therefore, more than what could be normally expected—for such boycott implied a refusal to recognise England as the Sovereign power over India. The legal right of the British Parliament to frame India's constitution was a matter of statute which vested in the British Parliament the legal sovereignty over India; but the "legal sovereign" cannot function effectively unless it is backed by the "political sovereign" which virtually means the supremacy of "public opinion". On the question of the Simon Commission, the "political sovereign" had so completely deserted the "legal sovereign" that

there was a complete divergence between the two. The history of all successful revolutions is the history of the transformation, at such crises, of the "political sovereign" into the "legal sovereign". No violence is necessary to accomplish this change when the people, as one man, revolts against the "legal sovereign." The duty of legal obedience, enjoined by law, cannot alter the solid fact that at such crises the legal sovereign is not actually obeyed and the political sovereign holds its sway over the people. This plain fact, if followed up by the setting up of parallel governments, sounds the death knell of the former effete government. (The question here is not whether such a situation had arisen in 1928 when all parties had decided to have nothing to do with the Simon Commission. The question, here, is whether it was not worth being tried at the moment when united India was, for want of a proper lead, wasting its accumulated energy in mere wind and sound by crying hoarse—"Go Back, Simon.") (Shri Subhas Chandra felt convinced that the hour had come to organise and launch a movement on an issue which the Western Democracies could understand and appreciate, namely, India's "Right to Self-determination.") A movement on the question of the abolition of the Salt Tax or the boycott of liquor is viewed by the world-abroad as mere local struggles in India; but a fight with British Imperialism on the broad and fundamental issue of the "Right of Self-determination" of every nation was bound to focus the attention of the world on India. But, Gandhiji had never attached any value to such world opinion. His very first act, on assuming the leadership of the Congress at its Nagpur session in 1920, was to close down the British Branch of the Indian National Congress. Be that as it may, no movement was launched in 1928 and the waves of enthusiasm among the political workers, the students and the labour were allowed to subside without contributing a jot or tittle to the real struggle.

(Instead of taking advantage of the unanimity in the nationalist front, the Gandhian statesmen created disruption in the Congress itself by kicking up a controversy over the comparative merits of Dominion Status and Complete Indepen-

dence as the goal of the Congress. The Madras Congress had already declared "complete national independence" as its goal. The fresh attempts, therefore, made by Gandhiji and others to make the Congress accept in toto the draft of a dominion constitution framed by the All-Parties Conference under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru, and, better known, as the "Nehru Constitution" met with stiff opposition from the leftists led by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. This was the first instance of an open revolt by young Subhas against the leadership of Gandhiji. It surpassed the comprehension of the young leader of the leftist group how a revolutionary organisation like the Congress, striving to wrest power from the British grip, could accept as its goal a Dominion constitution which could only come to India as a gift from Britain.) Moreover, "Only madness or folly could have led one to hope that the mighty British government would concede even Dominion. Home Rule without a struggle." The next year, at the Lahore Congress, however, Gandhiji himself moved the Independence Resolution and since then, every political party in India had adopted the goal of complete independence as the very first article of its faith. The Calcutta Congress had delivered an ultimatum to the British government that a mass Civil Disobedience Movement would be declared by the Congress if the Nehru Constitution was not accepted within the year 1929. In June, the Labour party came into power. In July, Gandhiji pressed for the boycott of legislatures though, on the opposition of Shri Subhas Chandra, the final decision on the question was not taken till the Lahore Congress in December. Why Gandhiji was so keen on the withdrawal of the Congressmen from the legislatures was not explained. How far this step suggested itself to him as a preliminary to the final struggle, and how far he was playing for time in the expectation that the new Labour Government in England might open negotiations with him were matters for conjecture. In any event, Lord Irwin, by a statement issued on October 31st, 1929, declared the intention of His Majesty's Government to convene a Round Table Conference with Indians to be invited by the government to London. He further

declared that "the natural issue of India's constitutional progress" was the attainment of Dominion Status. Gandhiji felt overwhelmed by the sincerity underlying the Viceroy's proclamation and tendered co-operation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a dominion constitution. Among those who joined Gandhiji was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the Lahore Congress, who, despite his convictions to the contrary, was prevailed upon by Gandhiji to sail with him in the same boat. Shri Subhas Chandra issued a statement opposing this offer of co-operation to the British Government. He had the foresight to visualise correctly the disastrous consequences that might ensue from the Congress participating in a Round Table Conference representatives to which would be selected by the government. It was a trap laid by the British government—he said, in so many words. The later developments at the Round Table Conference clearly showed how very correct were his apprehensions. The delegates to the Round Table Conference were so nominated by the government as to enable it to present to the world a spectacle of Indians fighting like Kilkenney cats over the loaves and fishes of the constitution. It was Gandhiji's wistful thinking which made him believe that Lord Irwin referred to Dominion Constitution as the "immediate" issue, while the Viceroy purposely used the expression "natural issue", meaning thereby, the ultimate shape of things to come.

The Lahore Congress marks the second stage of Shri Subhas Chandra's relationship with Gandhiji—the first having opened with his opposition to Gandhiji at the Calcutta Congress on the score of Dominion Status versus Complete Independence. Excitements ran high in the Lahore Congress owing to the failure of the Viceregal negotiations with Gandhiji and Pandit Motilal Nehru in December. The Congressmen from all the provinces in India had come to receive the leaders word of command to plunge headlong into a life and death struggle for independence. The leader, however, talked of the spinning wheel, the message of khadi, the removal of untouchability, the promotion of temperance and the suppression of the drink and drng traffic. It became quite apparent that

Gandhiji was not prepared for a fight. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose had hit on the right plan in the resolution he moved pleading for the setting up of a parallel Government. But the resolution was rejected and he seemed to his opponents to be too much of a Sein Finn for the Indian politics. As a reward for his consistent opposition to the unreal politics of Gandhiji, he was eliminated from the Working Committee of the Congress at the instance of Gandhiji. It was at the Lahore Congress that Gandhiji conceived of the idea of a "homogenous cabinet".

### FIRST CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

(The direct movement for which Shri Subhas Chandra pressed Gandhiji in 1928 was declared by the latter in 1930, when he could no longer deny it to the rank and file in the Congress.) In 1928, he refused to undertake the responsibility of a movement because he could not see "light", and, (in 1930, the movement was launched by him because he could see "impending lawlessness and secret crime", and, "a party of violence in the country which will not listen to speeches, resolutions or conferences, but believes only in direct action.") The long-suppressed feelings of the youth in the country were seeking an outlet through the forbidden path—the path of violence. (To reclaim these youths, therefore, the Civil Disobedience Movement had to be started. That Gandhiji had not wholeheartedly launched this movement for winning Complete Independence for India would appear from the statement he issued on the 30th January, 1930, in "Young India", declaring that what he wanted immediately was not "Complete Independence" but the "Substance of Independence".) He enunciated eleven points to convey an accurate idea of what he meant by the "substance of independence". The catalogue contained measures of social reform like total prohibition; administrative reform like the reduction of the salaries of the higher grade services to one-half or less for purposes of economy, abolition of the C. I. D. (Criminal Investigation Department) or its popular control; legislative reform like the issue of licences to use fire-arms for self-defence, subject to popular control, abrogation of Section 124A (Indian Penal Code), the Reg. III of 1818



and the like ; and reforms required for the amelioration of the economic condition of India, such as, the reduction of the ratio (of the rupee to the pound sterling) from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 4d. the reduction of the land revenue to at least 50 per cent, and making it subject to legislative control, the abolition of the Salt Tax, the reduction of the military expenditure to at least 50 per cent, to begin with, protective tariff on foreign cloth, the passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill (reserving to Indian Ships the Coastal Traffic of India) ; and a measure of limited amnesty leading to the discharge of all political prisoners save those condemned for murder, or the attempt thereat, by the ordinary judicial tribunal, withdrawal of political prosecutions, and the permission to all the Indian exiles to return. We have mentioned all the eleven points of Gandhiji and submit, most respectfully, that these reforms, each one the very best in its place and collectively calculated to usher in a good government could not, by any stretch of imagination, be called the "Substance of Independence", or "Purna Swaraj". "Had Lord Irwin accepted all these eleven points and carried out the reforms, India would no doubt have witnessed a British "Rama Rajya" but still it was open to the nationalist to say that "Good Government is no substitute for Self-government". After the Lahore Congress, Gandhiji was an "Independence-wallah" but this reformist mentality coloured all his political activities. His clash with Shri Subhas Chandra was the clash of two different ideals—"the Ideal of Reformation" and "the Ideal of Revolution."

A movement started for the realisation of such limited objectives could not but end in a compromise. But to the credit of the people of India it must be said, that their response to the leader's call was so magnificent, and, their determination to court all sufferings for the cause of complete independence was so great, that even Gandhiji had to alter the contents of his "substance of independence". It was an instance of a leader drawing inspiration from the enthusiasm of his followers and a movement initiated for limited purposes passed on to a higher plane. As proof of our contention, we quote below the statement issued from the Yerwada prison by Gandhiji, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, Mrs. Sarojini

Naidu and Sardar Patel stating that no negotiation with the government was possible until the government accepted the following points :—

1. India's right to secede at will.
2. Grant of a National Government responsible to the people including control of defence and finance.
3. India's right to submit to an impartial scrutiny the so-called public debt of India.

These terms indicated a triumph of the will of the people over vacillating leadership.

(It is not necessary for our purpose to relate the circumstances which led to the Gandhi-Irwin pact signed on the 4th March, 1931. Suffice it to say, that the peace-makers prevailed over Gandhiji to respond to the true christian spirit in which Lord Irwin was trying for a rapprochement. The terms of the pact, officially published, were as follows :—

The Congress agreed :

1. To suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement.
2. To participate in the deliberations of the forthcoming Round Table Conference for drafting a constitution for India on the basis of (a) Federation (b) Responsibility and (c) Adjustments and Safeguards that may be necessary in the interests of India.
3. To forego the demand for an investigation into the allegations of police atrocities in different parts of India.

The Viceroy agreed :

1. To release simultaneously all political prisoners incarcerated in connection with the non-violent movement.
2. To restore confiscated property and land to the owners where it had not been already sold or auctioned by the Government.
3. To withdraw the emergency ordinances.
4. To permit people who live within a certain distance of the sea-shore to collect or manufacture salt free of duty.
5. To permit peaceful picketing of liquor, opium and foreign cloth shops, the last item designed not as

a discrimination against British goods but as an encouragement to the Swadeshi Movement (i.e. indigenous industries).

More than a lakh of men and women had marched into the British jails under the Congress flag, and, many more had suffered innumerable privations since the movement was launched. Replying to a question asked by Shri Sant Singh, M. L. A., Sir James Crerar said on the floor of the Central Assembly that those convicted in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement upto the end of December, 1930, were 54,049, while those undergoing imprisonment at the end of December were 23,503. The Provincial figures respectively of those (i) sentenced to imprisonment for the Civil Disobedience Movement, and (ii) then undergoing imprisonment, were as follows:—Madras 3,998 and 2,110; Bombay 9,732 and 3,803; Bengal 11,463 and 2,973; U. P. 7,606 and 1,555; the Punjab 3,561 and 1,349; Bihar and Orissa, 10,899 and 4,980; C. P. 3,861 and 2,139; Assam, 1,089 and 291; N. W. F. Province 761 and 337; Coorg 6 and 4; Delhi 1,073 and 953. The casualties among the public during April, May, June and July due to firing were 101 killed and 427 wounded.

Considered in the context of the above figures, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was just a miserable document. Barring the paper recognition of the people within a certain distance of the sea-shore, to collect or manufacture salt free of duty and the right of peaceful picketing—rights which in peaceful times were not likely to be exercised—the Gandhi-Irwin Pact achieved nothing. While starting the movement, Gandhiji had said that he could start the movement two years before and when he ended the movement he restored the country to where it was two years before.

(Shri Subhas Chandra) openly expressed his resentment against such premature termination of the national struggle. The primary consideration Gandhiji had in starting the movement was the attitude of "a party of violence in the country" who could be held back only by direct non-violent action. Had he allowed this non-violent movement to run its course the country might have been saved from the recrudescence of violence that followed the Pact.) In between

April and December 1931, there were terrorist activities in Midnapore and Chittagong, bomb outrage at Patna, an attempt on the life of the Governor of Bombay, the Punjab Mail outrage, the murder of Mr. R. R. Garlick, District and Sessions Judge, an attempt on the life of the Commissioner of Dacca and the murder of the Police Inspector at Chittagong, the District Magistrate of Dacca, the District Magistrate of Tipperah and an attempt on Mr. Villiers.

Gandhiji did not start the movement in 1928 as desired by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose.

He started the movement in 1930, even though he could see no "light", to prevent terrorist outrages in the country.

He ended the movement abruptly in March 1931, before he could ensure the safety of India from the menace of terrorism.

(Thus, the movement which ended with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact served no useful purpose whatsoever.

To students, the youth and the labour Shri Subhas Chandra with his message of "Fight till Victory" was their only leader but the Congress High Command had grown too grey to follow his youthful leadership.)

#### AFTER THE GANDHI-IRWIN TRUCE

Strangely, at the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji gave expression to ideas, which Shri Subhas Chandra had propounded in 1929, when, as stated before, he opposed the very idea of participation in a Round Table Conference, and reiterated the same views in his Presidential address to the All-India Naujawan Bharat Sabha held simultaneously with the Karachi Congress. Broadly, they were, that the proposed Round Table conference was an unreality as the Indian delegates would be selected not by the people but by the British Government and as no finality would attach to decisions arrived at such a conference. "Safeguards", he said, would take away what "responsibility would give. He, therefore, pleaded at the Lahore Congress for the setting up of parallel government.

In the Round Table Conference,—a "debating society" of 107 delegates—all of whom except Gandhiji, were government nominees

the voice of India speaking through Gandhiji was drowned by the voices of other full-blooded Indians who also claimed to represent India—their motherland. For other nations it was difficult to distinguish the Indian chalk from the Indian cheese. Thus the trap laid by the reactionary opponents of Gandhiji worked well.

In despair, Gandhiji said at the Conference "I have endeavoured to study, as I had not done before, the list of the delegates, and the first feeling of oppression that has been coming upon me is that we are not the chosen ones of the nation which we should be representing, but we are the chosen ones of the Government."

He also spoke of his aspiration to set up a government to displace the existing government. Thus he gave a belated recognition to the views of Shri Subhas Chandra.

The Second Civil Disobedience Movement started immediately after Gandhiji's return from London. Gandhiji, in his usual manner, asked for an interview with the Viceroy. In the meantime, Lord Irwin had retired, and, in his place Lord Willingdon had come. In reply to Gandhiji's telegram seeking an interview, Lord Willingdon informed Gandhiji that His Excellency was not prepared to discuss any measure adopted by his government with the approval of His Majesty's Government. Thus, the door for negotiation with the government was closed, and the "half-naked, seditious, fakir" was no longer a welcome guest in the Viceregal Lodge. The government had gained enough time since the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and a strong Viceroy was at the helm of affairs at Delhi with the backing of a strong section of the conservatives who were virtually in power in the Coalition government of England. The spontaneity of the first Civil Disobedience Movement had been broken and the Congress could now be allowed to do the worse it liked to flare up an artificial movement. The Pact had given a handle to the government to suppress such risings in future and the country was sharply divided over the communal issue inflamed at the Round Table Conference. From the talks and the conduct of Gandhiji in England, the die-hard conservatives were convinced that "Gandhi was the best policeman the Britisher had in India". The initiative had passed out of the hands of the

Congress, and, the government was not afraid of adopting repressive measures. Firing was resorted to, seventeen times only in Bengal and twelve times in the rest of India for the purpose of dispersing assemblies. The "rule" of the "sword" had its full trial and eventually it attained its objective through the bungling of Gandhiji. When the people were conducting themselves fearlessly and over 120,000 had courted imprisonment, Gandhiji declared his fast unto death for the purpose of effecting certain modifications of the communal award declared by the Premier Ramsay Macdonald, on behalf of the Government. Here, again, was another unfortunate instance of how Gandhiji magnifies smaller issues at the sacrifice of the bigger ones. The Chauri Chaura incident was magnified to call off the Non-co-operation Movement, the detention of Ali Brothers was magnified to throw away the offer of a Round Table Conference in 1922, the relaxation in the operation of the Salt law was magnified to indicate a change of British heart justifying the termination of the First Civil Disobedience Movement and the dangers of separate electorate for the so-called depressed classes were magnified by his fast to the detriment of the broader political issue—the issue of complete independence. One could understand the value and significance of the fast, if thereby Gandhiji had questioned Englands' right to make the Communal Award. How could Gandhiji, consistently with his former declarations envisaging the complete liquidation of British rule in India, consider it worth while to stake his life for making "the British Government, of its own motion or under pressure of public opinion, revise their decision and withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the depressed classes"? Had he, by that time, lost all hopes of attaining independence, without which he had taken a vow not to return to his Ashram?

The effect of the fast undertaken for the removal of untouchability was, in the words of Shri Subhas Chandra, the same as it would be if in the middle of a battle, a General gave the order to his troops to start excavating a canal in order to supply water to the thirsty people of the country side.

According to the estimate, made by the Congress, 120,000 persons including several thousand women were imprisoned during the Second Civil Disobedience Movement. In May, Gandhiji suspended the Movement for 6 weeks and again resorted to a fast for giving a fillip to his 'Harijan' movement. Later on, he extended the period of suspension for six weeks more. What did he exactly mean by such sudden and piecemeal surrender of Civil Disobedience Movement? Then, the theory of individual Civil Disobedience was propounded and a few hundred followers of Gandhiji resorted to it. This enthusiasm for offering individual Civil Disobedience evaporated within a short time. Then was issued the most amazing fiat dissolving all Congress organisations in the country on the ground that the secrecy which they had maintained in conducting the Civil Disobedience campaign had made them corrupt organisations. No body knew at the time where this "Puritanism" of Gandhiji would land the national organisation built up by generations of martyrs and patriots in India. Secrecy is the soul of every organisation when it is at war and many brilliant victories have been won by camouflaged show of strength to the opponent, but such strategy had no place in Gandhian politics. Even, in the game of diplomacy he would place all his cards on the table, for he would have no secrecy in politics.

In utter disappointment, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose along with Shri Vithalbhai Patel issued the following statement:—  
 ✓ "We are clearly of the opinion that Mr. Gandhi as a political leader has failed. The time has, therefore, come for the radical re-organisation of the Congress on a new principle with a new method, for which a new leader is essential, as it is unfair to expect Mr. Gandhi to work the programme not consistent with his life-long principle. If the Congress as a whole can undergo this transformation it will be the best course. Failing this, a new party will have to be formed within the Congress, composed of radical elements."

It was at this stage, that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru imported into the politics of India the ideals of Socialism. Prior to that, the socialistic ideas were quite popular with the intelligentsia, and, the Government had through the Meerut Conspiracy

Case started in March 1929 which continued upto January 1933, helped the spread of communist ideal in India. Pandit Nehru in a series of articles entitled "Whither India" pleaded for the adoption of an advanced socio-economic programme as the basis of India's next political move. A group of ardent young-men at once jumped upon the idea, and, started the Congress Socialist Party—but they failed to enlist the active association of Pandit Nehru. Pandit Nehru is a very strange and queer admixture of the modernism and the Gandhism. Under the influence of his own advanced ideology he had always thought differently from Gandhiji, but by personal influence Gandhiji had always prevailed upon him to follow his lead. The teachings of Karl Marx had influenced his cultured mind considerably, and, his visit to Soviet Russia had convinced him of the practicability of the Socialist doctrine; but, he could do nothing more than popularise the Marxist ideology, because Gandhiji would not allow him to divide the country into the "Haves" and the "Have-Nots". Gandhiji's opposition or rather indifference to the Socialist ideology is too often ascribed to the moral indebtedness of the Congress exchequer to the multimillionaires and merchant-princes of India. But those critics who think that Gandhiji's sympathy can be so purchased do not know him at all. His opposition to Socialism is primarily due to his unwillingness to complicate the plain political issue of India, namely, the issue of national independence. In the present state of India's industrial backwardness, the Indian capitalists lumped together could not and cannot constitute a national menace. Moreover, his opposition to modern industrialism is so fundamental, that, given his way, he will have no industry in India at all. In his scheme of socio-economic re-construction, the European Socialism has no place, only because he wants to perfect his ideal of "Benevolent capitalism" and, believes in the Platonic doctrine that the rich should earn to share their income with the poor.

#### WAS NETAJI A MARXIST ?

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose deeply appreciated the wisdom of putting before the masses the simple issue of National Independence and on this question he was in complete



agreement with Gandhiji. Unlike Gandhiji, he was an ardent advocate of modernism ; but like Gandhiji, he also did not want to divide the nationalist front into classes. He was too conscious of his own role in Indian politics—he could be nothing but an anti-imperialist so long as Britain continued to hold India in subjection. He was a radical in every sense of the term, but he was content to keep his radicalism with regard to social and economic matters in the cold storage till a national revolution succeeded in altering the political status of India from a dependency to a free country.)

(His life was, from the very boyhood, a gigantic protest against the evils of the age ; but the one protest which he wanted to follow up by immediate action was directed against British Imperialism. Purposely he avoided all recognised “isms” and preferred the word “leftism” to describe his own ideology in Indian politics.) Speaking at the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh in March, 1940, he said: “A word is necessary here in order to explain what we mean by Leftism. The present age is the Anti-Imperialist phase of our movement. Our main task in this age is to end Imperialism and win national independence for the Indian people. When freedom comes, the age of national reconstruction will be the Socialist phase of our movement. In the present phase of our movement, will be those who will wage an uncompromising fight with Imperialism. Those who waver and vacillate in their struggle against Imperialism—those who tend towards a compromise with it cannot by any means be leftists. In the next phase of our movement, “Leftism” will be synonymous with Socialism—but in the present phase, the words “Leftist” and “Anti-Imperialist” should be interchangeable. “It is not necessary”, he said in his Presidential address at the Second Conference of the All India Forward Bloc, “that the Indian Revolution should be a bloody one, or that it should pass through a period of chaos. On the contrary, it is desirable that it should be as peaceful as possible and a peaceful transition can be ensured if the people are united and are determined to have their freedom.”

(“Was Shri Subhas Chandra a Marxist when he left India”? ask the pedants in politics. Our answer is both ‘Yes’ and ‘No’.) Karl Marx wrote his book “Das Kapital” nearly eighty years ago

and his observations were limited to conditions then prevailing in Europe. How could a realist in politics planning for India, which is so fundamentally different from Europe in civilisation, culture, traditions and socio-economic conditions, accept blindly the tenets of Marxism in all its details? According to Marx, economic conditions form the basis of life; and ideas and ideological systems are mere reflections of that material reality. Thus, every phase of human society, while moved by material forces, develops as a dialectical process, producing within itself, its own opposite. This dialectical method led Marx to believe that capitalism, as an economic system, bears in its own bosom the seed of its own destruction and would inevitably pass through a course of 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis' until the ultimate synthesis is attained in the form of socialism. Marx's materialistic interpretation of history is coloured greatly by the materialism of Europe but, the ancient history of India and the spiritual trend of her growth clearly indicate that his theory of "historical materialism" cannot have universal application. Shri Subhas Chandra developed a theory of synthesis of ideas which was rather Hegelian in outlook and as such fundamentally opposed to Marxian dialectics. Secondly, with Marx, Socialism became international or cosmopolitan in scope. This aspect of Marxism might be teleologically true, but the present tendencies, even in Russia, are towards national socialism (not Nazism). Russian communism has been so modified by Stalin as to suit the convenience of his "father-land."

Thirdly, Marx's Labour-theory of Value or the Theory of Surplus Value is thoroughly unscientific and can, at best, serve the purposes of crude propaganda. Fourthly, the attitude of the Marxists towards religion, coloured greatly by the contempt they felt for the corrupt church in Czarist Russia, can only alienate the sympathy of the pro-socialist elements in India. Lastly, his prophecy about the inevitable downfall of capitalism might be true of advanced industrial countries in which the movement towards the concentration of capital into fewer and fewer hands has already made considerable progress, but it inspires very little hope in a predominantly agrarian and industrially backward country like India. The advent of communism in Russia was rendered

possible by the conscious efforts made by the Bolshevik Party, and, its success cannot be attributed to the inevitable working of natural economic forces in the country. And considered in the light of the foregoing views of the Marxists, Shri Subhas Chandra was certainly not one of them.

(But he was a true Socialist in that he wanted the abolition of landlordism, the nationalisation of land, the state planning of agriculture and industries, the ultimate transfer of all powers to a strong party which would stand for the peasants and workers and run a centralised government with dictatorial powers during the transition period.) In effect, he accepted the socialist remedy as it is to be found in the economic contents of Socialism—(though in matters of details and dialectics he had his fundamental differences with the Marxist.)

He was so conscious of India's genius for effecting synthesis out of divergent currents of thought that he always avoided the orthodoxy which marks the views of doctrinaires in politics. He thought that there must be no dogmatism on the question of Free India's political and economic planning—no blind imitation or forced importation of any foreign model. He always wanted to maintain the fluidity of his mind towards the political experiments of the Communists, the Socialists and the Fascists in the West and it was his sincere conviction that there were much in each of these ideals which India could assimilate and blend together under a new name 'Samyavada', meaning thereby, 'the doctrine of Synthesis or Equality.' Socialism, Communism, Fascism were symptoms of a world wide protest against Capitalist-Democracy, and, he wanted India to deliver the goods to a world entrapped in the maze of "isms" and groping for light. In order to do this successfully, she must bring to bear on politics her unique genius for effecting synthesis of divergent views. The lesson of Indian civilisation is one of "Unity in Diversity" and Shri Subhas Chandra fondly hoped that the message of India to the world of politics would one day be the same message of "Unity in Diversity." For that way lies the deliverance of the warring world under the supreme leadership of India.

To orthodox 'Sovietists' in India we only say, in the words of George Bernard Shaw—"Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. Creeds, articles and institutes of religious faith ossify our brains and make change impossible. As such they are nuisances, and in practice have to be mostly ignored."

### EUROPE IN FERMENT

From 1933 to the beginning of 1938, Shri Subhas Chandra was in Europe. He arrived there at the psychological moment when the Treaty of Versailles was reaping the whirlwind of its own making.

If ever a Peace Conference had planned for war, it was the Paris Conference of 1917. In announcing the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles Mr. Lloyd George had said "These terms are written in the blood of fallen heroes ..... we must carry out the Edict of Providence and see that the people who inflicted this (war) shall never be in a position to do so again". Little could this old guard of England then imagine that what he had done to carry out the "Edict of Providence" would have to be undone completely during his own life-time. The last days of Lloyd George were his worse days of reckoning—reckoning the follies of his policy of crippling, maiming and mangling Germany. The two countries most shabbily treated at the Peace Conference were Italy and Germany and they were the first to avenge their national humiliation. The history of Europe from 1917 to 1945 is the history of the attempt at the reversal of this "Edict of Providence".

Soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles, rancours and rebellions reared their heads. Fascism in Italy was the very first symptom of an organised revolt against the Treaty. Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler would go down to history as typical products of the Treaty of Versailles. They succeeded in a miraculous manner in identifying their personal ambition with the rancour of a whole people. War-mongering was their chief purpose in politics. In his "Mein Kampf" Hitler writes :—Man is a fighting animal, and the nation is therefore a fighting unit. Any living organism which ceases to fight in the struggle for existence is

doomed to extinction. A country or a race which ceases to fight is equally doomed. The fighting capacity of a race depends upon its purity. Hence the necessity of ridding it of all foreign impurities. The Jewish race, owing to its universality, is of necessity pacifist and internationalist. Pacifism is the deadliest sin, for pacifism means the surrender of the race in the fight for existence. The first duty of every country is, therefore, to nationalise the masses; intelligence is secondary importance, will and determination are of higher importance. Only brute force can ensure the survival of the race. Hence the necessity for militarism. The race must fight; a race that rests must rust and perish. The German race, had it been united in time would now be master of the world to-day. Is it too late for Germany to realise that mystic function?"

Such a call to the baser instincts of man can never go without a response. Italy was the first to start the game and swallowed Abyssinia—the oldest independent state in Africa. The League of Nations—the organisational tribute of mere hypocrisy of "Big powers" in Europe to the cause of world peace—crumbled down like a house of cards. America felt so thoroughly disgusted with the spirit of bargaining which possessed the European powers at the peace conference that she refused to enter the League, though her Chief of the State, President Woodrow Wilson had sponsored the League idea. Japan's designs in the East made her sever all connections with the League. Soviet Russia, the Red Star in the political firmament of the world, was at first refused all recognitions by the League on the ground of her faith in communism. Thus by the choice of Anglo-French entete the League came to be a mere coterie. This weakness of the League emboldened Germany to commence her acts of aggression.

The complete collapse of the scheme of collective security was a signal to Hitler to stretch his nailed fist. On March 7, 1936, under the cover of peaceful negotiations, he poured German armies into the Rhineland. He did it in complete defiance of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles and the subsequent Locarno treaties. He silenced all voices of opposition in Europe by a mere sop—his offer to re-enter the

League. Hitler could very well say unto himself—"Well begun is half done". From Rhineland he turned his greedy eyes towards Austria, and, swallowed up Austria in a single night—the night of March 11, 1938. From Austria to Czechoslovakia was one step and no more. But the outrage on Czechoslovakia had to be perpetrated with care and tact. France by a treaty was bound to protect Czechoslovakia, and, the traditional foreign policy of Britain would make her join France in all her wars. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain had therefore to busy himself to smoothen down the sharp edge of the butcher's knife. Hitler had to be appeased to keep Britain free from war. Chamberlain flew to Berchtesgaden and Munich to effect the extinction of the Czechoslovakian Republic without bloodshed. His anxious visits to Hitler seemed as if England was going on pilgrimage to the Den of Mars with offerings to propitiate the war-god. Or was he trying, with his frail "Umbrella", to divert the on-coming typhoon to the East—to Russia?

On March 15, 1939 German armies occupied Bohemia and Moravia. The Czechoslovakian Republic was extinguished.

Mr. Harold Nicolson, a member of Chamberlain's House of Commons and a statesman with a life-long record of diplomatic service, records his reactions to the incidents of the day in the following words :—

"Hitherto, on every occasion when Herr Hitler had broken a treaty, they had given him the benefit of the doubt. His denunciation of Locarno and his military occupation of the Rhineland, had, it is true, been something of a shock—but had not Germany the moral right to fortify her own territory? The "occupation of Vienna may have been carried out in rather a high-handed manner, but had not the Austrians always been anxious to join the Reich? The pressure put upon the wretched Czechs at the time of the Munich crisis had undoubtedly been harsh and humiliating, but then how could you expect such a great country as Germany to allow her brothers across the frontier to remain under a foreign yoke? Always, until March 15th, there had been some argument, some excuse, which enabled the ordinary peaceful person to pretend to himself that there was nothing abnormal about Herr Hitler's methods or ambitions, and that, if only we were

patient, he would quiet down in time. The seizure of Prague changed all that. In twelve hours the great majority of people in England realised that the policy of appeasement had failed completely. We had permitted the 'dictator Powers to gain control over China, Abyssinia, Spain, Rhineland, Austria and Czechoslovakia in the hopes that by our complacency we might gain their friendship. All we had gained was the contempt of friend and foe alike. It was now clear that Herr Hitler was out for loot and conquest".

#### IN EUROPE AS AN EXILE •

(From 1933 to the beginning of 1938, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose lived in Europe as an exile. There he was allowed to proceed, on serious grounds of health, from his detention without trial under Reg. III of 1818. There, in the far away lands, India's beloved warrior—patriot, Shri Subhas Chandra, had a unique opportunity to view the Indian struggle in the background of world politics.) Here, in Europe, during those tumultuous days of 1933 to 1938, was a born enemy of British Imperialism to whom all the honours which an alien government could bestow were unendurable and he preferred persecutions and incarcerations to an easy-going life in a slave country. (From 1921 to 1933 he had to his credit a record of nearly six years imprisonment. The rigours of prison life had made this flower of the nation a consumptive) But no malady could suppress the fire in him. (To Europe he was sent by his British jailors at a time when they apprehended great danger to his life. He first went to Vienna and there he met another ailing ardent nationalist leader of India, Shri Vithalbhai Patel.) (The affinity of their mind drew them closer to each other and they decided to make India known to Europe.) Every thinking man in Europe was then agitated over the wrongs done by the Peace Conference. Did it ever occur to any of them that India which means 400 millions of the human race was also smarting under a grievous wrong done to her by Imperialist Britain? Were the European people properly apprised of the methods of persuasion and cajolery by which Britain induced India to make her princely offering of full blooded raw youths and tons of money to the European cauldron popularly called the "Great War?" Were they told how during the war Britain had held out promises of Swaraj to India, and how on

the termination of the war, India's demand for Swaraj was met by Britain with Rowlatt Act, Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, and wholesale imprisonment of all those who non-violently refused to co-operate with British Imperialism? Were the European Nations told how in utter disregard of all her talks of making the world safe for democracy Britain was experimenting with unadulterated autocracy which, in the name of law and order, dared detain men without trial and even allowed them to die of hunger-strike in prisons? The European Nations, including the British nation, were totally ignorant of the system of administration prevailing in India, and of the economic exploitation to which she was subjected by various vested interests and of her spiritual degeneration under British Rule. (Shri Yithalbhai Patel and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose felt that in the bar of world opinion India was going by default. Old and infirm Patel bequeathed a rich legacy in favour of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to be spent by him in foreign propaganda on behalf of India. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose decided to devote his whole time, as an exile in Europe, to the task of making India known to Europe and for himself to know and understand Europe.)

At Vienna he studied the Municipal administration under the socialist regime and closely watched the Troop rally at Schonbrunn. The doors of London were closed against him when he was invited by the Indian residents in London to preside over the All-Parties London Conference of Indians. A system that functions by preventing its subject from proceeding towards the seat of his Sovereign only condemns itself. Lord Zetland had once said of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose that "he is a man of wonderful organising abilities—almost a genius; and the British Empire could not afford to keep him outside the prison". Here was a further admission that even London—the very centre of British power and the Capital of the vast Empire—could not safely admit within her ambit one particular Indian subject of His Majesty's Government namely, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. He, therefore, went to Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Western Europe and after a short respite at Geneva, he visited France, Italy and Germany. The Balkan States like Sofia, Budapest, Yugo-Slavia received him with open arms as the champion of the oppressed people in the world.



The illness of his father brought him back to his residence at 38/2, Elgin Road, Calcutta. The Police order made under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act did not allow him to make his presence felt anywhere beyond the said premises. He was not to go beyond the precincts of his house, not to see or to talk or to correspond with anybody who was not an inmate of his own house. Immediately after his father's "Sradh Ceremony," he was directed to leave India. This time he went to Rome where he met Ex-King Amanullah of Afganisthan and many important personages in Italy. His most important engagement in Europe was his meeting with DeValera in Ireland. It would be pardonable sentimentalism to call these two leaders of oppressed nations—Spiritual Brothers. Between DeValera and Subhas Bose there is one common bond—an undying passion for freedom.

(In 1936, in response to the widely expressed desire of his countrymen, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the President-elect of the Indian National Congress, invited Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to attend the Lucknow Session of the Congress. He had denied unto himself all rest in Europe and was then in a poor state of health. But the British Government provoked him to despise all considerations of his health and to proceed to India. The Government held out the threat that if he returned, he "could not expect to remain free". At this, he quickly made up his mind and reached the shores of India on April 11, 1936. Once again, Reg. III of 1818 was resorted to by the Government of India and he was snatched away from his loving and admiring countrymen. "Keep the flag of freedom flying" was his only message on the eve of his arrest.) The pressure of public opinion in England and in India forced the Government to release him in March 1937. As a free man he again went to Europe in May 1937 and stayed there till he returned in 1938 to preside over the Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress.

On his return from Europe, he wrote as follows under the caption "Europe—*To-day* and *To-morrow*".

"It is customary in modern politics to classify the different nations as the 'Haves' and 'Have-nots'. The "Haves" are those, like Great Britain and France, that have profited as a result of the Treaties of Versailles, Trianon and Neuilly following

the Great War. The 'Have-nots' are those that have lost territory under some of these treaties or have specific grievances against their provisions. In Europe, Great Britain, France, as well as the succession states that have been carved out of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire are among the 'Haves'. On the other hand, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria are among the 'Have-nots'. Though Russia lost much of her territory as a result of the last war, she is now interested in maintaining the *status quo* and is therefore classified among the 'Haves'. And though Italy acquired territory from the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the War, she is nevertheless regarded as a 'Have-not' because she was expecting a greater share of the spoils of War... ..

The really explosive forces in Europe to-day are Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Ranged against them are Britain, France and Soviet Russia. On the complicated chess-board of Europe interminable moves are going on and the scene is changing from day to day. ... ..

In the Balkans if Germany succeeds in isolating Yugo-slavia and Rumania from Czechoslovakia, she will, in the event of a War, be able to occupy Prague in six hours and overrun Czechoslovakia within a few days. But the bigger problem will remain—Russia. The Russian Colossus has often proved to be an enigma. It baffled Napoleon—the Conqueror of Europe. Will it baffle Hitler?"

#### WAS NETAJI A FASCIST ?

The upheavals he had witnessed in Europe convinced him of the power of a disciplined, and organised military unit over the destiny of a Nation. The successful *coups d'etat* accomplished by a handful of Fascists in Italy and a small number of Nazis in Germany were concrete proofs of such power. He, therefore, took pains to study the inner organisation of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. But he was careful enough not to be entangled in the internal politics of any country in Europe. Countries other than India were important to him in so far as they served the purposes of India. Many in India sensed in his activities and movements in Europe a definite predilection towards Fascism. To give the lie direct to such propaganda Shri Subhas Chandra Bose issued a statement from Geneva.

There he said :

"In view of certain statements made in the British Press and reproduced thereafter in the Indian Press, which may have led to some misunderstanding of my socio-political views, I desire to say that there has been no fundamental change in my position. Since I came to Europe I maintain more strongly than ever that while it is imperatively necessary that we should study all the modern movements abroad, it is equally necessary for us in India to chalk out the future lines of our progress in conformity with our past history and our present and future requirements. The geographical and intellectual isolation which India has enjoyed for centuries should enable us to adopt a sympathetic but critical attitude towards other lands and nations. It is necessary for us in India to distinguish clearly once for all between our internal and external policy.....In determining our internal policy, it would be a fatal error to say that the choice for India lies between Communism and Fascism. No standpoint or theory in socio-political affairs can be the last word in human wisdom. The socio-political theories and institutions of modern nations are the product of their history, environment and needs. They are liable to change or develop just as human life is. Moreover, it should be remembered that some of the most interesting institutions of the present day are still under experiments. Time must elapse before they could be declared to be successful and, in the meantime, we should not mortgage our intellect anywhere. My own view has always been that India's task is to work out syntheses of all that is useful and good in the different movements that we see to-day. For this purpose we should have to study with critical sympathy all the movements and experiments that are going on in Europe and America and we would be guilty of folly if we ignore any movement or experiment because of any preconceived bias or predilection."

Despite this clear enunciation of his views, attempts have been made to collect evidence of his pro-fascist leanings. A sentence from here and an utterance from there are put together to hold him up as a Fascist. His praise for the Italian Youth Organisation, his reference to Mussolini in 1935 as one of the men "who counts in European politics", his frequent emphasis on the great importance of a militant volunteer corps are bolstered up to prove

his Fascist turn of mind. Those who argue like-wise suffer from a distorted notion of what Fascism really means. They are apt to see a beer in every bush and may even smell Fascism in one's appreciation of Italian arts and painting. Such tavern-notions of politics deserve no serious attention but for the fact that they have gained considerable currency due to the efforts of interested propagandists.

Fascism was an outgrowth of the psychology of disillusionment and defeat which pervaded the whole of Italy after the First Great War. Unlike other political theories, the philosophy of Fascism was developed as the Italian movement took its shape, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, only to explain and justify the positive doings of the Fascist party. The first Fascio di Combattimento founded by Mussolini in March 1919 drew up a programme which was republican, democratic, anti-clerical and, even to some extent, internationalist. It proclaimed the doctrine of "popular sovereignty," "universal adult suffrage", "complete liberty of thought, conscience, religion, association, press and propaganda," and also demanded the redistribution of the national wealth, including the division of the land among the peasants, and finally, the exploitation of industries, transport and public services under the control of the Unions of technicians and workers. Gradually, however, Mussolini changed his programme to compass the defeat of the Socialists who were his political rivals ; and after the March on Rome, the creed of Mussolini became aggressively nationalistic, authoritarian, anti-communistic and anti-parliamentary. The Fascist Corporative State was neither Capitalistic nor Socialistic for the simple reason that the main strength of Fascism came from the 'petite bourgeoisie' whose interests were identified with the interests of the State. To fulfil its object, the State became totalitarian in character but this totalitarianism was by no means the distinctive mark of Fascism. Totalitarianism is as much an integral part of Communism as it was of Fascism. What distinguished the Fascist party from the Communist party were its undemocratic composition, anti-cosmopolitan character, chauvinistic outlook and the economic policy of "Class Collaboration" instead of "Class Struggle" with a view to save Capitalist-Imperialism from the attacks of the Socialists. The Fascist movement was essentially an opportunist movement in favour of the maintenance

of the system of private ownership of property and individual, rather than state-operation of most branches of economic life over which the ultimate claim of the State to interfere was recognised in principle. It was no more than "a creed of violence and personal ambition dressed up in the borrowed garments of a belated Hegelianism."

Shri Subhas Chandra was anything but an opportunist in politics and the Italian-cum-German doctrine of opportunism could not certainly take the place of his political philosophy. As a strict disciplinarian, he appreciated the value of the "leader-principle" in politics—but so did Aristotle in his ideal of the "Benevolent Ruler". The militarist Youth Organisations of Italy, the Labour Service Corps of Germany or the rigid party-discipline of the Nazi party could appeal to him only because he appraised their worth in a national struggle with a mind free from political prejudice. But these organisational subtleties were no part of Fascism and could be engrafted in any system of political rule. Even, the "Strong Central Government" which he advocated in his scheme of "Samyavada Sangha" had in it no more the taint of Fascism than of "Communism"—in fact, it had neither. In his Haripura Presidential address, he developed this idea of a strong centralised party which should control the affairs of a Free India. That party should, in the first place, have a democratic basis so that leaders would not be thrust upon the people from above but elected from below. Secondly, within the limits of the constitution, other parties would be allowed to function so as to prevent the State from becoming totalitarian. In his opinion, the Congress, with its democratic constitution and outlook, would be pre-eminently fit to play the role of the strong centralised party he looked for in a Free India.

In a free India, he said, "the Congress, instead of withering away, will have to take power, assume responsibility for administration and put through its programme of reconstruction. Only then will it fulfil its role. If it were forcibly to liquidate itself, chaos would follow. Looking at post-war Europe we find that only in those countries has there been orderly and continued progress where the party which seized power undertook the work of reconstruction. I know that it will be argued that the continuance of a party in such circumstances standing behind the

state will convert that state into a totalitarian one; but I cannot admit the charge. The state will possibly become a totalitarian if there be only one party as in countries like Russia, Germany and Italy. But there is no reason why other parties should be banned."

His views on 'Nationalism', 'Socialism' and 'Internationalism' were quite different from those of the Fascists. Nationalism of Shri Subhas Chandra was the nationalism of Mazzini as distinct from the nationalism of Cavour which the Fascists extolled for the purposes of popularising their imperialist plans. Shri Subhas Chandra's nationalism was in no way opposed to internationalism, and, instead of seeking to isolate India, he, like his Guru, Deshabandhu Das always cherished the hope that India would take the lead in forming an Asiatic Federation of free-nations as a concrete move towards a World Federation.

His programme of Socio-economic reconstruction was the same as that of the Socialist. He could not think of a New World except in terms of Socialism. But, as a realist, he was in favour of concentrating his whole attention and energy on the present fight against British Imperialism. "Socialism is not an immediate problem for us—nevertheless, socialist propaganda is necessary to prepare the country for socialism when political freedom has been won" he said at Haripura. When, therefore, he talked of syntheses between Fascism and Socialism, he never for a moment contemplated the giving up of the economic contents of Socialism—the ideal that really counts in the world to-day. His "nationalism" sought the frustration of Imperialism and was not a mere emotional antidote to Socialism as it was with the Italian Fascists and the German Nazi Party. To call such a political thinker a Fascist is to put a heavy discount on patriotism and practical political wisdom. The part he played in the Trade Union and the endeavours he made to oblige the Congress to take up the cause of the workers and peasants which ultimately culminated in the recognition of their claims in the 'Fundamental Rights' adopted by the Lahore Congress, and, the place he always assigned in his political programme to the work of reviving the 'Village Panchayats' of Ancient India as units in a free Republic would always repudiate the baseless and mischievous assertion that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was, at heart a Fascist.

And to those who fail to think of Netaji without

making pedantic references to the current "isms", we reply, in the words of Edmund Burke, that 'one sure symptom of an ill-conducted state is the tendency of the people to revert to theories.' He liked as much the open pro-nationalist urge in Fascism as the Socialistic conception of equitable distribution of wealth in society. In the background of economic serfdom prevailing in western democracies, he found no meaning in the democratic ideals of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality and, if he had his own way, he would have inscribed in their places the words 'Hierarchy,' 'Order' and "Discipline."

But no matter what he liked or disliked, it can always be said of him, as Lord Tennyson said of the Duke of Wellington that "Whatever record leap to light he never shall be ashamed."

There are many in India who often indulge in intellectual gymnastics in the schools of political "ism"s—Fascism, Socialism, Communism, Internationalism etc. But this prince among intellectuals had only one "ism" to lead him to his goal—Indian Nationalism. By puerile expression of sympathy for any of these foreign "isms" it is always easy to create enemies, but by following a policy of strict neutrality towards all "isms", not inimical to Indian Nationalism, one can have many allies. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was not a barren intellectualist and not a word crossed his lips either in approbation or in denunciation of these "isms".

#### CLAY FEET OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The European situation had to him one refreshing point about it. He found that Britain was rapidly losing her position and influence as a First rate Power. The whole foreign policy of Britain was at that time dominated by a "Fear Complex". The fear of losing her prestige by active interference—the fear of risking a war—the fear of the growing might of Soviet Russia, the fear of enraging the Axis Powers, who, in her estimation could alone give a fight to Russia—the fear of losing any portion of her far flung Empire by being involved in European War, led her Premier Mr. Chamberlain to play the role of an appeaser and a man of peace. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, by close contact

with the Axis powers had gained an insight into Axis mind. He alone of all Indian leaders knew how the wind was blowing. He wanted India to strike hard at the root of British Imperialism while Britain was afflicted by this "Fear Complex". This, he thought, was the opportune moment when India could achieve her independence by a non-violent fight. His understanding with the anti-British forces of the world was complete. It was an indiscriminate alliance directed against British Imperialism which statesmen would not fail to appreciate though political savants and intellectual parrots might not.

His presidential address at the Haripura Congress is a political document of very great value. It is the document by which posterity will judge his political wisdom and foresight. "The British Empire", he said, "is a hybrid phenomenon in politics. It is a peculiar combination of self-governing countries, partially self-governing dependencies and autocratically governed dependencies".

"The policy of divide and rule, though it has its obvious advantages, is by no means an unmixed blessing to the ruling power. As a matter of fact it creates new problems and new embarrassments. Great Britain seems to be caught in the meshes of her own political dualism resulting from her policy of divide and rule. Will she please the Muslim or the Hindu in India? Will she favour the Arab or the Jews in Palestine, the Arab or the Kurd in Iraq? Will she side with the King or the Wafd in the Egypt? The same dualism is visible outside the Empire. In the case of Spain, British politicians are torn between such alternatives as Franco and the lawful government—and in the wider field of European politics between France and Germany. The contradictions and inconsistencies in Britain's foreign policy are the direct outcome of the heterogeneous composition of her empire. The British Cabinet has to please the Jews because she cannot ignore Jewish high finance. On the other hand, India office and the foreign office have to placate the Arabs because of Imperial interest in the Near East and in India. The only means whereby Great Britain can free herself from such contradictions and inconsistencies is by transforming the Empire into a federation of free nations. If she could do that, she would be performing a miracle in history. But if she fails, she must reconcile herself



to the gradual dismemberment of a vast empire where the sun is supposed not to set. Let not the lesson of the Austro-Hungarian Empire be lost on the British Empire."

"To-day, Britain can hardly call herself "The Mistress of the Seas". Her phenomenal rise in the 18th and 19th centuries was the result of her sea power. Her decline as an empire in the 20th Century will be the outcome of the emergence of a new factor in the world history—Air Force. It was due to this new factor, Air force, that an impudent Italy could successfully challenge a fully mobilised British Navy in the Mediterranean. Britain can rearm on land, sea and air up to the utmost limit. Battleships may still stand up to bombing from the air, but air force as a powerful element in modern warfare has come to stay. Distances have been obliterated and despite all anti-aircraft defences, London lies at the mercy of any bombing squadron from a Continental centre. In short, air force has revolutionised modern warfare, destroyed the insularity of Great Britain and rudely disturbed the balance of power in world politics. The clay feet of a gigantic Empire now stands exposed as it has never been before."

"There is one problem in which I have been taking a deep personal interest for some years and in connection with which I should like to make my submissions—I mean the question of a foreign policy of India and of developing international contacts. I attach great importance to this work because I believe in the years to come, international developments will favour our struggle in India. But we must have a correct appreciation of the world situation at every stage and should know how to take advantage of it. The lesson of Egypt stands before us as an example. Egypt won her treaty of alliance with Great Britain without firing a shot, simply because she knew how to take advantage of the Anglo-Italian tension in the Mediterranean."

"In connection with our foreign policy the first suggestion that I have to make is that we should not be influenced by the internal politics of any country or the form of its state. We shall find in every country, men and women who will sympathise with Indian freedom, no matter what their political views may be. In this matter I should take a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy. Though Soviet Russia is a Communist State, her diplomats have

not hesitated to make alliances with non-socialist states, and have not declined sympathy or support coming from any quarter. We should, therefore, aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every country who would be sympathetic towards India."

He closes his presidential speech with the words—"India Freed Means Humanity Saved".

### HIS GOLDEN VISION

As the President of the Congress he had two main tasks before him. The first was to organise the country, and, the second was to persuade Gandhiji to launch a struggle. The first task he undertook and discharged with gusto. During his whirlwind tour all over India he buoyed up the people with hope in the future, faith in their strength and enthusiasm for a last fight. Everywhere he repeated what he had said in a Calcutta meeting on the 13th March 1938—"The psychological moment has arrived when Indians should press their 'United Demands' on the British Nation who, at the present moment, are powerless to resist them". On the 16th September, at Shillong, he reiterated the same words—"the international situation is such that if we can take advantage of the same, freedom in India will be attained in no distant date without war." As days rolled on and the international situation grew more complicated, he saw before him a new light—a glowing vision—the vision of a free and glorious India. In a voice indicative of the firmness of his mind the President asked his countrymen to organise for the last fight for freedom. "Organise"! "Organise"! "Organise"!—that was his order of the day.

But, the second task baffled him again and again. In 1921, the young patriot, who had resigned from the Indian Civil Service, popularly called the "Heaven-born Service", had rushed to "Mani Bhawan" at Bombay on his return from England to seek clarification of Gandhiji's programme and he had to go away "depressed and disappointed". On his return from Europe in 1938, he again went to Gandhiji to explain to him his own plan of action and to seek his blessings but just as before, he had to go away "depressed and disappointed." Gandhiji felt at the time that the country was not prepared for a struggle. Opposition to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's programme came from the Congress

leaders of high rank whom we popularly call the "Congress High Command.") We shall discuss the causes of these differences in the Congress later on. What was more depressing to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose than this opposition to his future plan of action was the then tendency on the part of certain 'old guards' of the Congress to tone down the Congress opposition to the Federal Scheme as contained in the Government of India Act 1935. The Congress had already accepted office in the Provinces. The recent move was for the acceptance of the Federal ministry on the basis of a modified scheme. (Shri Subhas Chandra Bose had sensed this compromising attitude when he was in Europe. As soon as he landed in India, he gave out a feeler through a statement that "he was not opposed to the idea of Federation on principle but he was opposed to the idea of Federation as propounded in the Government of India Act. He wanted a Federal Republic of India." The Haripura Congress upheld the Rashtrapati's view and declared that "the imposition of this Federation will do grave injury to India and tighten the bonds which hold her in subjection to imperialist domination". But power is always so corrupting that a strong section of Congressmen was still conspiring to extend their sphere of influence from the Provincial to the Central Secretariat. The tendency grew so irresistible that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose declared on the 8th. July, 1938, that he would "resign the Presidentship of the Congress, if necessary, in order to be free to carry on the agitation against the Federal Scheme". The atmosphere was thick with rumours. Pandit Nehru suddenly flew to England to spend a week-end with Lord Lothian at the noble lord's countryhome at Norfolk. Many feared, not without reason, that the country will be confronted with *fait accompli* by the Congress leaders on the issue of the Federation. The history of the Congress is replete with such instances of *fait accompli* in the past. "Either agree with me or I go out" was the usual argument of Gandhiji whenever, in the last twenty years, he had to seek the approval of the Congress to something which he was bent on doing. What a Hobson's Choice it was for a democratic body! •

In the meantime, the European situation was developing rapidly and in the manner anticipated by Rashtrapati Subhas Chandra Bose. The British Premier, Mr. Chamberlain

had, in a brutal manner, obliged Czechoslovakia to accede a portion of her territory in favour of Germany. The Munich agreement stirred the conscience of the world, but British morale was then at such a low ebb that the British populace cheered Mr. Chamberlain as a man of peace and the only solitary voice raised against the Munich agreement was the voice of Mr. Duff Cooper. It was then quite evident that Hitler was playing for time. Here, in India, the lonely figure of Rashtrapati Subhas Chandra Bose was trying to make the Congress keep pace with the time so that India might not miss the bus. The psychological moment was approaching but Indian leaders showed little signs of appreciation of the new situation.

#### A LONELY WARRIOR

The inevitable breach between the Rashtrapati and the Congress High Command could not long be avoided. The time for the next session of the Congress was approaching and the Congress High Command embarked on a policy of isolating Shri Subhas Chandra Bose from Congress politics. By his independence of spirit he had completely alienated the old veterans of the Congress. It was not personal animosity which led them to decide on a policy of leaving Shri Subhas Chandra Bose utterly alone. The conflict of ideologies and programmes should not be lost sight of in a consideration of this dispute.

But the rank and file in the Congress and the very vast multitude of congress-minded men in the country revolted against this attitude of the Congress High Command. His name was again proposed for the next year's Presidentship along with the names of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Pattabhai Sitarammya of Andhra. Maulana Azad withdrew from the contest in favour of Dr. Pattabhai Sitarammya and commended the Andhra leader's name to Congress delegates. This direct canvassing against Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was resented by many in the country. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose welcomed this opportunity to have a contest on the basis of definite programmes and principles. "With the progressive sharpening of anti-imperialist struggle in India", he said, "there have emerged new ideas and ideologies and programmes." The

contest between the Rightist and the Leftist, so he thought, would help in the clarification of the issues, and would give a clear indication of the public mind. His opponents were, however, reluctant to fight the election on the score of policies and programmes. They pooh-poohed the political significance of the contest and wanted the country to believe that the President of the Congress was no more than a ceremonial head of the Congress. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shri Rajendra Prasad, Shri Jayaramdas Daulatram, Shri Shankar Rao Deo, Shri Bhulabhai Desai issued a statement wherein they said—"We feel it is a sound policy to adhere to the rule of not re-electing the same President except under exceptional circumstances. ....The Congress policy and programme are not determined by successive Presidents. If it were so, the constitution will not limit the question to one year. The policy and programme of the Congress when they are not determined by the congress itself are determined by the Working Committee. The position of a President is that of a Chairman. More than this, the President represents and symbolises, as under constitutional monarchy, the unity and solidarity of the nation. Any controversy over the election even on the score of policies and programme is, therefore, to be deprecated."

The analogy between the President of the Indian National Congress and the Constitutional Monarch was highly misleading. The constitutional monarch has not the power to choose his own cabinet, whereas the President of the Congress has unlimited powers to nominate the members of his cabinet—the Working Committee of the Congress. Rightly did Shri Subhas Chandra Bose point out that "the President is like a Prime Minister or President of the United States of America who nominates his own cabinet". He further asserted that the year 1939 would be a momentous year in our National History. International tension was already there and in India the prospective fight over the federal scheme was wellnigh brewing. The zero hour was fast approaching both in Europe and in India, and, he felt, that it would have been unpatriotic for him if, despite such convictions, he had allowed his false sense of modesty to prevail upon him to withdraw from the contest. For one full year he had endeavoured to awaken the

veterans of the Congress to the realities of the situation and had entreated them to decide upon a final struggle against British Imperialism. He had gone with them as far as he could, but their faltering steps had made him move forward. In this presidential election he had his chance to seek the verdict of the nation or rather to appeal to the nation against the decision of the Congress High Command. About one thing he had no doubt whatsoever—the year 1939 would be a momentous year.

The statement issued by the members of the Congress Working Committee against their own President gave a rude shock to the nation. It seemed that intrigues and designs were afoot to frustrate the work done by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose in mobilising public opinion behind his own demand for a direct struggle. To the Congress delegates the election issue was quite clear—"To Fight or To Capitulate?" The nation elected Shri Subash Chandra Bose as the Rastrapati for the coming year. The verdict was clear—they wanted Shri Subhas Chandra and all that he stood for at the time.

So long the Congress High Command was fighting without Gandhiji. The result of the election evoked from Gandhiji a very amazing and startling statement. "The defeat is more mine than his" (Dr. Sittarammya's), said Gandhiji. The result of the election had made it clear to him that the delegates did not approve of the principles and policy for which he stood. He held out a threat of complete non-co-operation with the President-elect and called upon his trusted lieutenants to give effect to his threat. "The Congress, henceforth, must have a homogenous cabinet" said Gandhiji and that became the cry of the Gandhians in the Congress. Gandhiji concluded his statement with an ungenerous testimonial to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose—"After all Subhas Babu is not an enemy of his country".

One wonders, even at this distance of time, how the proverbially sweet-tempered 'Mahatma' could wield a pen so as to create so intense bad blood among fellow Congressmen. By his advice to his followers to come out of the Congress on the plea that "those who being congress-minded remain outside the Congress by design represent it most" he was directly inviting them to cause a deadlock to the Congress machinery.

In response to his words, 12 members of the Congress Working Committee resigned in a body to teach the country "a much needed lesson." Prior to this, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose tried his best to throw oil on the troubled water. Immediately after Gandhiji had expressed his pious belief that "Subhas Babu is not an enemy of his country", Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, to disarm all suspicions in the minds of the Gandhians, declared,—"It will always be my aim and object, to try and win his (Mahatma's) confidence for the simple reason that it will be a tragic step for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's Greatest Man". He even went on a pilgrimage to Wardha to have Gandhiji's blessings. But his efforts at preventing a breach in the Congress failed completely. The resignation reached the President when he was prostrate in bed with high fever and was too weak to read anything. The resignations were calculated to overburden the President in such a weak state of his health with multifarious duties—the duties of the Secretary and the duties of the Parliamentary Board. For a moment, it seemed, that the deadlock in the Congress was complete. But the vim and fire in the President were stronger than all his physical ailments. Quickly he responded to the call of duty; the resignations were accepted and the Congress continued functioning with Shri Sarat Chandra Bose as the only active member of the Working Committee. The collapse of the Congress machinery so cruelly planned by other leaders was averted by the two brothers—the two life long comrades-in-arms—Shri Sarat Chandra Bose, the Elder and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the younger.

What happened thereafter constitutes the most shameful chapter in the annals of the Congress.

The acceptance of the resignation inflamed the passions of the Gandhian leaders all the more. In all their subsequent acts one could hardly find any trace of that sublime "Ahimsa" which they display for the agents of British Imperialism in India under Gandhiji's inspiration. To the general body of Congressmen they gave the impression that Shri Subhas Chandra was striving to oust their "Mahatma" from the political life of India. Thank to their manœuvrings at Tripuri, they succeeded in raising the issue "Gandhiji or Subhas—whom do you want"? Even threatening letters were addressed to Shri Subhas Chandra calling upon him

either to resign or to face a motion of no-confidence against him. A serious attack of broncho-pneumonia and intestinal infection had, however, made the target of all their attacks and intrigues, a complete invalid, so much so, that the then first physician of India, Sir Nilratan Sircar apprehended the chances of physical collapse unless Shri Subhas Chandra was allowed complete rest. Ungenerous whispers reached the ears of the President-elect that he was hiding himself from the open session of the Congress under the false pretext of illness. It seemed that humanity had for the time being fled away from the Gandhian fold, and Shri Subhas Chandra decided to dispell all suspicions by entering into Tripuri in an ambulance car.

The Gandhian Group marshalled their forces by clandestine visits to delegates' camps in the darkness of night and their venomous "sectarianism", to use the language of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, for which they canvased support, made the night at Tripuri darker still. The first shaft was aimed at discrediting him by making him responsible for the Congress deadlock, and, Pandit Govindballav Pant made a heroic use of it when the doctors almost despaired of the Rashtrapati's life. Pandit Jawaharlal tried to dress up the wound by his attempts to remove the Rashtrapati to Jubbulpore Hospital on medical advice. To all such requests the Rashtrapati sharply retorted "I have not come here to go to Hospital in Jubbulpore. I would much rather die here than be removed elsewhere before the session was over". Thus, he stood by his post and calmly received all unkind cuts, without the least thought of retaliation. He sought, immediately after his recovery, the co-operation of those who had been most vindictive in their attitude towards him since the Presidential dispute. And, yet, he was not the apostle of "Love and Ahimsa" to those who quarrel with a sick rival lying in a precarious condition !

Politics is too often described as a game of mud throwing. But, in the hands of those who wistfully think of wresting India's "Spiritual Salvation" from the jaws of the British lion by pure "Soul force", it became, at Tripuri, a soul killing profession. Even a political heretic concedes the claims of Gandhiji as a "Nation Builder". To the world of politics, he has contributed an "awakened India" and on the millions of Indians he has imparted a sense of national honour and a will to be



free. But while history will judge him great because of this unique contribution, his followers attribute his greatness to the imaginary excellence of his novel experiments with his new technique of warfare in politics and to his infallibility which has to be mysteriously assumed and never challenged. There is no absolute truth, says Gandhiji, but his followers are adamant in claiming for his doctrine a degree of universality and absoluteness unknown to the political history of the world. Who will deny that Winston Churchill has saved England from utter ruination ? And yet, his countrymen have not allowed their gratitude to have the better of their political sense. In England at war, Churchill was the Chief of the State, but the same Englishmen have relegated him to a backbench, because of his relative unimportance in times of peace. But India is expected to remain tied to the spinning wheel of Gandhiji on account of the miracle wrought by him in 1921. Churchill, though defeated, continues to play his role in politics, but the defeat of Gandhiji, even on minor matters, drives him to the Ashram. What a strange difference in the psychology of the two peoples ?

#### A COLD-BLOODED REALIST

Thus, the Rashtrapati—the nation's elected leader, the idol of millions of his countrymen—the man of iron will and undying patriotism whom the mighty British Empire could neither tempt nor coerce—was denied a free hand to serve his people and to lead them to their cherished goal—the goal of complete independence. To the eternal ignominy of the many talents with which our supreme national institution—the Indian National Congress is abounded, history will record the Tripuri incident as nothing short of the throwing away of a golden opportunity to win India's independence. The message which the Rashtrapati had sent from his sick bed would bear clear testimony to his keen foresight, supreme courage and rare mastery over international politics. The nation to-day can do no better than read his words of guidance and caution and repent for not having honoured the prophet in his own country. With tears and reverence we remember what he said in his Presidential address at Tripuri :

“Since we met at Haripura in February 1938, several significant events have taken place in the international sphere. The

most important of these is the Munich Pact of September 1938, which implied an abject surrender to Nazi Germany on the part of the Western Powers, France and Great Britain. As the result of this, France ceased to be a dominant power in Europe and the hegemony passed into the hands of Germany without a shot being fired. In more recent times, the gradual collapse of the Republican Government in Spain seems to have added to the strength and prestige of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The so-called democratic powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics for the time being. But how long will that be possible? And what have France and Great Britain gained by trying to eliminate Russia?"

"There is no doubt that as the result of the recent international developments in Europe as well as in Asia, British and French imperialism have received a considerable setback in the matter of strength and prestige".

"Coming to home politics, in view of my ill health, I shall content myself by referring only to a few important problems. In the first place, I must give a clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for sometimes past, namely, that the time has come for us to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our National demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum. The time is long past when we could have adopted a passive attitude and waited for the Federal scheme to be imposed on us. The problem no longer is as to when the Federal Scheme will be forced down our throats."

"The problem is as to what we should do if the Federal Scheme is conveniently shelved for a few years till peace is stabilised in Europe. There is no doubt that once there is stable peace in Europe, whether through a Four-Power Pact or through some other means—Great Britain will adopt a strong Empire policy. The fact that she is now showing some signs of trying to conciliate the Arabs as against the Jews in Palestine is because she is feeling herself weak in the international sphere. In my opinion therefore, we should submit our National Demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum and give a certain time limit within which a reply is to be expected. If no reply is received within this period, or if an unsatisfactory reply

is received we should resort to such sanctions as we possess in order to enforce our National Demand”.

“The sanction that we possess to-day is Mass Civil Disobedience or Satyagraha. And the British Government to-day are not in a position to face major conflict like an All-India Satyagraha for a long period. It grieves me to find that there are people in the Congress who are so pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for a major assault on British Imperialism. But looking at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner, I do not see the slightest ground for pessimism. With a Congress in power in eight provinces, the strength and prestige of our national organisation have gone up. The mass movement has made considerable headway throughout British India. And last but not least, there is an unprecedented awakening in the Indian States. What more opportune moment could we find in our National history for a final advance in the direction of Swaraj particularly when the International situation is favourable to us?”

“Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I must say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool our resources and put our full weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British imperialism irresistible”.

“Shall we have the political foresight to make the most of our present favourable position or shall we miss this opportunity, which is a rare opportunity in the life of a nation ?”.

#### TRIPURI—THE TURNING POINT

On March 15, 1939, when the dust raised by dissensions at Tripuri had cast a gloom over the political horizon of India and Gandhiji was having a parley with Lord Linlithgow at the Viceregal Lodge at New Delhi, the Nazi troops were marching into Bohemia and Moravia and Herr Hitler was having his triumphal march into Prague to proclaim to the world the extinction of the Czechoslovakian Republic. Who can describe the anxiety of Rashtrapati Bose caused by this new complication in the European situation? Rashtrapati Subhas Chandra was then lying ill at Dhanbad and the question came floating before his mind—‘How long vain idealism will delude India? He had no doubt

that the snobbery of the Anglo-French powers would compel Russia to side with Nazi Germany. He must have felt elated by the prospect of such a formidable phalanx of mighty powers arrayed against Imperialist Britain. As a realist who took his inspiration only from History, he wanted to brush aside all considerations of political "isms" to take advantage of this anti-British front. History offers no instance of a war having been fought for any Socio-Economic or Political ideals. International wars result from conflicts inherent in the international anarchy known as the "World Order" and the shrewdest among the nations stands to gain therefrom. But how in vain he had tried to impress this plain truth on the Congress leaders? He had, from 1921, experienced to what great heights of self-less patriotism and silent suffering Congressmen in India could rise and had shared with them, in no mean measure, the persecutions and sufferings which constitute the badge of patriotism in India. How very different were his memories of Tripuri? The Congress which he had so far served with devotion was now torn asunder by dissensions and intrigues. The situation called for a bold decision. The options before him were two-fold. He could either take upon himself the responsibility of disowning the leadership of the old veterans and assume the control of the Congress machinery or he could free himself from the internal conflicts in the Congress and do what he could to take advantage of the international situation. Some of the leftists in the Congress desired that the Rashtrapati should adopt the former course. But he felt that self-respect, honour and duty towards the country demanded that he ought to resign, after having made all possible attempts to avert a conflict within the Congress.

The sponsors of the Pant resolution at Tripuri, whereby the Rashtrapati was enjoined to nominate such members to the Working Committee as had the approval of Gandhiji, hoped that the resolution would create a situation in which Rashtrapati Bose would be obliged to eat the humble pie. Gandhiji had owned up the victory of Shri Subhas Chandra as his own defeat. The followers of Gandhiji were now determined to humiliate him in a crooked manner after they had failed to beat him down squarely.

Rashtrapati Bose was too patriotic to allow his politics

to be influenced by his personal feelings. As the humble servant of the nation, he proceeded to carry out the mandate of the Congress. What followed the Pant resolution would appear from the statement he made before the All-India Congress Committee when it met at Calcutta on April 29, 1939.

In tendering his resignation he said :—

"Friends, you are aware of the resolution that was passed at Tripuri Congress relating to the new Working Committee. That resolution was as follows :

"In view of various misunderstandings that have arisen in the Congress and the country on account of the controversies in connection with the Presidential election and after, it is desirable that the All-India Congress Committee should clarify the position and declare its general policy."

"The Committee declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies of the Congress which have governed its programme in the past years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that they should continue to govern the Congress programme in future."

"The Committee expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year and request that any aspersion should have been cast against any of its members."

"In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such crisis, the Committee regards it as imperative that the Congress Executive should command his implicit confidence and requests the President to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji."

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"I regret very much that since the Tripuri Congress, I have not been able to announce the personnel of the new Working Committee. But this has been due to circumstances beyond my control. Owing to my illness, I could not proceed to meet Mahatma Gandhi, in lieu thereof, I started correspondence with

him. This enabled us to clarify our ideas and viewpoints, but did not bring us to a settlement. When I realised that correspondence had proved ineffective, I wanted to make a frantic effort to meet Mahatmaji at Delhi—but that effort also failed.”

“After Mahatmaji’s arrival in Calcutta we have had prolonged conversations, but unfortunately—they did not lead to any solution. Mahatmaji’s advice to me is that I should myself form a Working Committee leaving out the members who resigned from the previous Working Committee. This advice I cannot give effect to for several reasons. To mention two of the principal reasons, I may say that such step would be contrary to the directions in Pantji’s resolution, which provides “*inter alia*” that the Working Committee should be formed in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji and should command his implicit confidence. If I formed such a committee as advised above, I would not be able to report to you that the Committee commanded his implicit confidence.”

“Moreover, my own conviction is that in view of the critical times that are ahead of us in India and abroad, we should have a composite Cabinet commanding the confidence of the largest number of Congressmen possible, reflecting the composition of the general body of the Congress.”

“Since I could not implement Mahatmaji’s advice, I could only repeat my request that he should kindly shoulder the responsibility vested in him by the Tripuri Congress and nominate the Working Committee. And I told him that whatever Committee he appointed would be binding on me, since it was my determination to implement Pantji’s resolution.”

“Unfortunately for us, Mahatmaji felt unable to nominate the Working Committee.”

“As a last step, I tried my best to arrive at an informal solution of the above problem. Mahatmaji told me that the prominent members of the previous Working Committee and myself should put our heads together and see if we could arrive at an agreement. I concurred and we made that attempt. If we had succeeded in coming to a settlement, we would then have come up before the A. I. C. C. for formal ratification of our informal agreement. Unfortunately, though we spent several hours in discussing the matter, we could not arrive at a settlement. I have, therefore, to report to you, with deep

regret, that I am unable to announce the personnel of the new Working Committee."

"I have been pondering deeply as to what I could do to help the A. I. C. C. in solving the problem that is now placed before it. I feel that my presence as President at this juncture may possibly be a sort of obstacle or handicap in its path. For instance, the A. I. C. C. may feel inclined to appoint a Working Committee in which I shall be a misfit. I feel, further, that it may possibly be easier for the A. I. C. C. to settle the matter, if it can have a new President. After mature deliberation, therefore, and in an entirely helpful spirit, I am placing my resignation in your hands."

In reply to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's appeal to him to withdraw the resignation, Shri Subhas Chandra said "Serious and critical times are ahead of us. We must pool our resources and pull our whole weight if we are to emerge triumphant out of the external crisis that is fast overtaking us. To this arduous task I shall contribute my humble mite. What does it matter if I am not in the Presidential chair? My services will be always at the disposal of the Congress and of the country for what they are worth. I claim to have sufficient patriotism and sufficient sense of discipline to be able to work as an ordinary soldier in this great fight for India's political and economic emancipation."

These were noble sentiments, nobly expressed and truly translated into action in subsequent days. They speak of something more than the mere negative virtue of not being an enemy of the country.

### HIS FOREIGN POLICY

A statesman, said Machiavelli, should be "strong like a lion but cunning like a fox." In foreign diplomacy, he wanted to be strictly Machiavellian. The freedom of 'Bharat Mata' was the one and the only goal of his life. Whatever favoured the achievement of that goal was, to him quite welcome. The Soviet Russia, who, by alliances with capitalist countries was always furthering her communist ends and Ireland, who though small, was holding her own against the united opposition of the other members of the British

Commonwealth of Nations, convinced him about the value of diplomacy in politics. The lack of a well-conceived foreign policy on the part of the Indian National Congress irritated him too often. As will be seen later on, it was mainly on the score of foreign policy and diplomacy that his rapture with the Congress High Command was complete after the outbreak of the Second Great War. He wanted the Congress to side with all the anti-British forces of the world, irrespective of their political ideology—but the Congress continued to chant the usual talks on Democracy and Progress. Not having any pre-planned idea of exploiting the international situation to India's advantage, the Congress allowed itself to be led by sentimental trivialities and personal predilections of its leaders. Almost overnight, India became an ally of China because Pandit Nehru claimed personal friendship with the Generalissimo and Madam Chiang-Ki-Shek. India was even expected to give her moral support to England on the ground that Gandhiji had broken down before His Excellency the Viceroy when, immediately after the declaration of War, he was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction. The Congress could cultivate the friendship of America because prominent Americans were expressing their own generous feelings for the Indian patriots. To one whose mission of life was completely identified with the politics of India, such unmeaning and puerile alliances were more than mere subjects of political debate. They were to him positive evils. "India must in this grave crisis think of herself first"—he said in protest to the sentimental effervescence in favour of China, England and America. Unfortunately for India, she did think of herself in August 1942, but then, it was too late. We shall presently illustrate our viewpoints in our detailed discussion of Indian politics in relation to European War.

In 1928, Shri Subhas Chandra had entreated Gandhiji to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement but Gandhiji refused.

Two years after, in 1930 Gandhiji himself led the First Civil Disobedience Movement.

In 1939 and 1940, Shri Subhas Chandra implored Gandhiji to sanction a nationwide movement for freedom, but Gandhiji refused to do anything which might have embarrassed the British.



Two years after, in 1942, Gandhiji started a "do or die" struggle to make the British "quit India" and the movement certainly embarrassed the Government in its war-efforts.

All these do appear highly inconsistent ; but consistency is, perhaps, the hobgoblin of little minds. Or was it the inevitable consequence of the lack of a well-thought out foreign policy ?

### THE FORWARD BLOC AND THE NATIONAL DEMAND

Freed from all wranglings, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was now able to give effect to his plan of action. He had, for one full year, tried all methods of persuasion to have the whole Congress behind his programme. As the President of the Congress, he had purposely desisted from thrusting either his personality or his programme on the Congress. In a letter to him, Pandit Nehru had complained that as President Shri Subhas Chandra Boses' attitude was entirely a passive one. "In fact you have functioned more as a speaker than as a directing President"—so said Pandit Nehru. He had avoided the path of active interference with the policy of the veterans in the Congress on the sole ground that he did not like to antagonise them from the very beginning. Foiled in his attempt to unify the Congress behind a common programme, (he was reminded of the course which recommended itself to his political guru—Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, who, in similar circumstances, organised the Swaraj Party within the Congress after its Gaya Session. He, therefore, decided to form the Forward Bloc.)

Was the Forward Bloc born out of a sense of despair ? The question is well answered by the Vienna statement referred to before. There he said in May, 1933, "that either the Congress as a whole must undergo radical re-organisation or a new party would have to be formed within the Congress."

The Forward Bloc was the product of historical necessity. It was born at the right time. It was a revolutionary party in that its primary function was to accelerate India's march towards freedom. "If this task had been postponed or delayed," said Shri Subhas Chandra at the Pabna District Political Conference, "the internal crisis might have appeared at a time when the external crisis was over-taking us". For full one year he had tried to bring about the desired transformation in the Congress. But the whispering

campaign started by some of the big guns of the Congress against him finally convinced him that the talk of unity in the congressfold was then no better than a delusion and a snare.

On May 3rd, 1939, Shri Subhas Chandra announced the formation of the Forward Bloc. The object of the Bloc was to rally all radical and anti-imperialist forces in the country on the basis of minimum programme, representing the greatest common measure of agreement among radicals of all shades of opinion. The Bloc was started as a party within the Congress and its composition and constitution were such that it could work only as an integral part of the Congress. The difference between the official group in the Congress and the Forward Bloc was mainly one of outlook. The Gandhi-group in the Congress was always seeking Swaraj through negotiations, with the result that their explanation of Swaraj changed from "Complete Independence" to "Dominion Status" to the "Substance of Independence" according to convenience. Shri Subhas Chandra had only one political goal, viz, Complete Independence, and he was consequently sick of all talks of compromise with British Imperialism. The word "Revolution" has unfortunately acquired such an association with violence in India that many imagine that the Forward Bloc stands for the adoption of violent methods in India. Nothing can be more sinister and misleading than such an assumption about the methods of the Forward Bloc. Shri Subhas Chandra, even after the formation of the Forward Bloc, had reiterated his faith in "non-violent non-co-operation" as the best weapon for fighting the country's battle for freedom in the present circumstances of India. Speaking at the Bogra District Political Conference in Bengal, he appealed to his countrymen to adopt the method of "non-violent non-co-operation" on a wider scale than hitherto to attain freedom within a short time.

The Forward Bloc had not to hunt for a programme. It was the organisational expression of that urge in the country for a forward move, which Shri Subhas Chandra wanted the Congress to take, with a view to obtain the fullest advantage of the international situation. Accordingly, it tried to put organised pressure on the Congress High Command to launch a countrywide non-violent movement at this psychological moment.

Prior to the Tripuri Session of the Congress, the Bengal Provincial Political Conference held at Jalpaiguri under the

presidency of Shri Sarat Chandra Bose unanimously adopted a resolution on "National Demand". This conference recommended to the Tripuri Session the idea of a six month's ultimatum to the British Government. It further declared:

"Self-determination for all peoples is now the universally accepted principle in modern world. During the last few decades, this principle was applied in part or whole in the different countries of the world, but India has been excluded from the sphere of its operations".

"In the year 1919 and subsequent thereto on the plea of the principle of self-determination the maps of Europe and Asia were remade and new frontiers were demarcated. India, with her hoary civilisation, her distinctive culture, tradition, history, and her fundamental unity was pre-eminently a fit case for the application of this principle."

"The people of India now feel that they have been denied this too long. They must demand their birthright forthwith."

The Tripuri Congress rejected the idea of an ultimatum and Gandhiji refused to lead any movement. On the 13th May, 1939, the letters which passed between Gandhiji and Shri Subhas Chandra were released to the press. Therein, Gandhiji wrote as follows:—"I have the firm belief that the Congress as it is to-day cannot deliver the goods, cannot offer civil disobedience worth the name. I smell violence in the air I breathe". Young Subhas Chandra was thus left alone to give to the country a new lead and the Forward Bloc was the practical expression of his readiness to shoulder the responsibility. "He believed, contrary to what many prominent leaders of the Congress said, that the time was ripe for India to embark upon an active struggle for independence. A splendid opportunity for demanding independence from Britain would be lost if not availed of now",—so said Shri Subhas Chandra in a speech he delivered in Bombay on June 28, 1939. To quote his own words again, "We do not want a struggle for its own sake. We want freedom without struggle if possible, and through a struggle, if necessary. We have put our trust in God."

(The 'Forward Bloc', as the only dynamic organisation in the country, marched ahead for a fight with British Imperialism. From within the Congress, it was open to the Forward Bloc to organise local civil disobedience! Such a policy of localised

civil disobedience had a double motivation. First, it would keep inflamed the zeal of the people for a struggle for independence. Secondly, it would thoroughly expose the reformist leadership by embarrassing the Congress Ministers in the Provinces and ultimately compel the High Command to yield to the nation's demand for a last fight for freedom.

### THE PATEL PURGE

To curb the activities of the 'Forward Bloc', the All-India Congress Committee, at the instance of Sardar Patel, adopted a resolution prohibiting the launching of Civil Disobedience Movement by Congressmen without the previous sanction of the Provincial Congress Committees concerned. This attempt to impose the will of a section of Congressmen, who formed the first 'homogeneous cabinet' after Tripuri, on the dissentients in the Congress was resented by many Congress Committees. The Patel resolution marked a definite change in the history of the Congress, which had so far been an open platform for all nationalist elements in the country who agreed to strive for complete independence through non-violent means. Barring the Congress creed, there was nothing to prevent the entire nation from being embeded in the Indian National Congress, and prior to Tripuri Congress, the composite cabinet formed by the President, with an eye to the divergent groups, was an essential feature of the Congress Executive. The Patel resolution made unquestioning obedience to the orders of a 'homogeneous cabinet' an additional condition for being a Congressman. The imposition of the prohibitory order further showed that the Congress was no longer to be satisfied by the member's obedience to 'positive mandates' but it also demanded the right to issue prohibitory injunctions. In fact, the Patel resolution proved that the Congress High Command was making a bold bid for transforming this national Congress into a totalitarian organisation by extending the theory of homogeneity from the "Cabinet" to the entire Congress. It was a move to purge the Congress of all dissentients—the leftists. From the standpoint of individual Congressmen, it was an encroachment on their right to offer 'Satyagraha' to resist all forms of injustice and oppression. The right to offer Satyagraha was the right of every individual Congressman; but the latest move

was calculated to curb and canalise this valuable right. Shri Subhas Chandra very openly denounced the Congress fiat as a fascist measure and organised an All-India Protest Day to demonstrate the country's sense of resentment against the Patel resolution. He was threatened with disciplinary action by Dr. Rajendraprasad, the President of the Congress; but he claimed his "constitutional and democratic right" to protest against the Patel resolution and to mobilise Congress opinion in support of such protest. The All-India Protest Day was observed throughout India on the 9th July, 1939, and on the 18th July, 1939, the Congress President called upon Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to explain his conduct. The explanation he submitted to the President is reproduced below :—

"In the first place, one has to distinguish between protesting against a certain resolution and actually defying it or violating it. What has so far happened is that I have only protested against two resolutions of the A. I. C. C."

"It is my constitutional right to give expression to my opinion regarding any resolution passed by the A. I. C. C. You will perhaps admit that it is customary with a large number of Congressmen to express their views on resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. when a particular session of that body comes to a close. If you grant Congressmen the right to express their views on resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. you cannot draw a line and say that only favourable opinions will be allowed expression and unfavourable opinions will be banned. If we have the constitutional right to express our views then it does not matter if those views are favourable or unfavourable. Your letter seems to suggest that only expression of unfavourable views is to be banned."

"We have so long been fighting the British Government among other things for our Civil Liberty. Civil Liberty, I take it, includes freedom of speech. According to your point of view we are not to claim freedom of speech when we do not see eye to eye with the majority in the A.I.C.C. or in the Congress. It would be a strange situation if we are to have the right of freedom of speech as against the British Government but not as against the Congress or any body subordinate to it. If we are denied the right to adversely criticise resolutions of the A. I. C. C. which in our view are harmful to the country's cause then it would amount to denial

of a democratic right. May I ask you in all seriousness if democratic rights are to be exercised only outside the Congress but not inside it ?”

“.....You will agree further, I hope, that it is open to a minority to carry on a propaganda with a view to converting the majority to its point of view. Now how can we do this except by appealing to Congressmen through public meetings and through writings in the press ?.....If you maintain that once a resolution is passed in the A. I. C. C. it is sacrosanct and must hold good for ever, then you may have some justification for banning criticism of it. But if you grant us the right to review or amend or alter or rescind a particular resolution of the A. I. C. C. either through that body or through the open session of the Congress, then I do not see how you can gag criticism, as you have been trying to do.”

“I am afraid you are giving an interpretation to the word ‘discipline’ which I cannot accept. I consider myself to be a stern disciplinarian and I am afraid that in the name of discipline you are trying to check healthy criticism. Discipline does not mean denying a person his constitutional and democratic right.”

“Apart from the fact that it is our constitutional and democratic right to protest against resolutions which in our opinion are harmful to the country’s cause, a consideration of the merits of the two resolutions will show that such protests were really called for. In our view, these two resolutions, if given effect to, will serve to accentuate the drift towards constitutionalism, to increase the influence, power and authority of the Provincial Ministries at the cost of the Congress organisations, to isolate artificially the Congress from the general public as also the A. I. C. C. from the rank and file of the Congress. Moreover, they will serve to undermine the revolutionary spirit of the Congress. Consequently, in the best interests of the country, these two resolutions should be immediately held in abeyance and ultimately altered suitably or withdrawn.”

“In this connection, I cannot help drawing your attention to certain incidents at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and after. Please do not forget what the Swaraj party did in those days. Please do not forget that when the A. I. C. C. amended the resolution of the Gaya Congress, the Gujrat P. C. C. resolved to defy it.”

"Lastly, please do not forget that Mahatma Gandhi wrote in "Young India" if my recollection is correct, that the minority has the right to rebel. We have not gone so far yet as to actually rebel against the decision of the majority. We have simply taken the liberty of criticising certain resolutions passed by the majority in the teeth of our opposition."

"I am really surprised that you have made so much of what we regard as our inherent right. I hope you will accept my explanation as satisfactory. But if you do not do so and if you decide to resort to disciplinary action, I shall gladly face it for the sake of what I regard as a just cause. In conclusion, I have to request that if any Congressman is penalised in connection with the events of the 9th July, then you will also take action against me. If the observance of an All-India day of the 9th July is a crime then I confess, I am the arch-criminal."

The Working Committee, however, found the explanation unsatisfactory and declared Shri Subhas Chandra Bose disqualified as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. This disciplinary action, it might be mentioned, was taken at the instance of Gandhiji. "I must confess", said Gandhiji, "that the Subhas Babu resolution was drafted by me." The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, in complete disregard of the Working Committee's resolution, again elected him the President and the result was the suspension of the entire Committee. The other provinces also vied with each other to honour him and the whole of India was ramified with "Forward Bloc" organisations. Thus the disciplinary action taken against Shri Subhas Chandra defeated its own purpose. The Crown followed the Cross in rapid succession.

### INDIA AND EUROPE

The European situation was shaping in the manner predicted by Shri Subhas Chandra. As the Rashtrapati of the Tripuri Congress he had said—"The so-called democratic Powers, France and Great Britain, have joined Italy and Germany in conspiring to eliminate Soviet Russia from European politics for the time being. But how long will that be possible. And what have France and Great Britain gained by trying to eliminate Russia?"

Abyssinia, Rhineland and Austria, Czechoslovakia and China partially held out tangible proofs of what France and Great Britain had gained by trying to eliminate Russia. The question put by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was also pricking the conscience of the so-called democratic powers. On the morning of March, 18 1939, a British enquiry was addressed to Moscow—"Would Russia support Rumania if attacked"? Russia replied the same evening and proposed a "Six-Power Conference" consisting of Russia, Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, and Turkey to devise steps against aggression. The proposal was rejected by Lord Halifax as "premature" and he made a counter-proposal suggesting a "four-power declaration" to be made by Russia, Britain, France, Poland, whereby they would undertake to consult together if aggression occurred in any part of Europe". Russia accepted this counter-proposal, but it was abandoned on the opposition of Poland. The negotiations clearly showed how half-hearted Britain was in her overtures to Russia. Later on, Britain offered "unilateral guarantee of support" to Poland, Rumania and Greece, without caring to have a prior consultation with Russia. Russia was asked to accord the same guarantee but Russia replied that such "unilateral guarantee" was useless. She again proposed a triple alliance of "Big Three"—Britain, France and Russia—to resist direct aggression against any one of them and to declare a joint-guarantee of all small states between the Baltic and the Black Seas. For 22 days Britain slept over the proposal, and then, sprang a surprise on Russia by making the following proposal: 'Russian support to be automatic if Britain and France should get involved in war through the guarantees to the five states—Poland, Rumania, Belgium, Turkey and Greece; but if Russia was involved through her guarantees to the Baltic states her entanglement and the question of help to her would then be a matter for consultation'. This unequal formula was rejected by Russia and the negotiations showed how utterly Russia was distrusted by powers seeking her co-operation. 'The explanation of this failure of negotiations could be found in the designs of the Anglo-French power to eliminate Russia from European politics. "But how long would that be possible"? asked Rashtrapati Bose at Tripuri.



On August 23, 1939, the Russo-German Pact was signed and left the world in no delusion about the future developments of international events. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose welcomed the pact as a master-stroke of diplomacy of the century. He rejoiced to see the growth of a powerful anti-British front, but to his great mortification, India, the worst victim of British Imperialism, was not ready to take advantage of the situation.

The Russo-German pact was the most brilliant achievement of Hitler and brought him very near to the objective of his life, namely, the undoing of the Treaty of Versailles. From Bismarck he had inherited the belief that Russian alliance should be the cornerstone of German foreign policy. In his "Mein Kampf" Hitler had written: "The very fact of a treaty with Russia would be the signal for a new war. Its end would be the end of Germany."

On September 1st, 1939, at dawn, the German troops invaded Poland. On September 3rd, 1939, the Anglo-French Powers declared war on Germany. Mr. Chamberlain broadcasting to his people said: "You cannot imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed.....Now, may God bless you all and may He defend the right. For it is evil things that we shall be fighting against: brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecutions." His Majesty the King Emperor called his people, both at home and overseas, to fight for "the final victory of right and freedom over oppression". His Excellency Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, declared on the same day that India was at war with Germany. He appealed to India "to make her contribution on the side of human freedom as against the rule of force".

#### VICEREGAL DECLARATION OF WAR

India, a land of 400 millions of peace-loving human souls, held in a state of abject subjection by an alien race whose responsible Minister of the Crown, Lord Birkenhead, in his capacity as the Secretary of State for India, had said—"We have won India by the sword and we will rule India by the sword"—was now called upon to be at war with Germany to fight against "the rule of force". India, which since 1919, had

been a seething mass of discontent because of Britain's broken promises of self-government, promises which led India to shed her young blood during the Great war of 1914—was now required to fight against "Bad faith and Injustice" of the Nazis. India—an emasculated and non-violent India—which was groaning under the agony of indiscriminate firing on unarmed and peaceful men, women and even children at Jallianwalla Bagh and where youngmen could be snatched away from their homes and kept in detention for an indefinite period without trial for the crime of patriotism; India, accustomed to witness the parade of machine guns, rifles, revolvers, armoured cars and bombers employed for the sole purpose of suppressing movements conducted by an unarmed people, was, now, by virtue of a Viceregal fiat, to be an ally of Great Britain to fight against "oppression and persecution" of the Poles in Europe.

"Evil things": "Brute force", "Bad faith", "Injustice" "Oppression", and "Persecution"—evil things they undoubtedly were and India was called upon by her rulers to fight against such evil things on the European front. Was she not required to close her eyes to evil things—literally identical in nature—in her own home? The Defence of India Act and the Rules made thereunder were so framed as to make her voice altogether inaudible. She was told that her contributions towards war would be contributions on the side of "human freedom". What a great comfort was it for a slave to fight for the freedom of his masters and their kith and kin? Political scandal can go no further!

Were the Dominions within the British Commonwealth of Nations—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Eire—at war with Germany on the 3rd September, 1939? India's declaration of war against Germany was an automatic affair; it followed the declaration of war by the Imperial Government of Great Britain—no matter how India took it. But, the Statute of Westminster, 1931, had vested the Dominions with a good deal of "External Sovereignty"—their foreign relations were matters for their own Governments to decide. It was open to them to stand by England, as later on, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa did of their own accord, or to be "Neutral," like Eire, or even to be friendly with the "enemy" of Great Britain, as Eire was charged to be by Mr. Winston Churchill.

Herein lies the great difference between a "Dependency" and a "Dominion"—a difference that is vital and not merely technical. British statesmen too often see in India "the birth of a New Dominion". Sweet words butter no parsnip !

To our eternal shame, we have to admit that when the war came upon us it found the Congress napping. The declaration of war by the Governor-General and Viceroy of India without any reference to the Central legislature, which was then in session, touched the very honour of India, but owing to its state of unpreparedness, the Congress could not take up this challenge to India's honour. The Gandhian Congress clearly betrayed its want of foreign policy and different leaders spoke in different voices. On the 5th September, 1939, Gandhiji accompanied by his Secretary, Shri Mahadev Desai, hurried to Simla to have talks with Lord Linlithgow. Not a word was told to the Governor-General regarding the constitutional impropriety of the declaration of war made by him without consulting the people's representatives in the Central Legislature. The statement he publicly made was that he had told His Excellency that his own sympathies were with Britain and France from purely humanitarian point of view. "It almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force"—he added. Lofty sentiments no doubt, but how were they taken by the Head of a Government which Gandhiji had himself castigated as "Satanic". It is the nature of every Satanic government to know "no God but brute force". Why, then, this discrimination in favour of Britain? Was it just and proper on the part of the undisputed leader of the nation to go about airing his personal sympathies on a matter of such momentous importance?

On the 9th September, 1939, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived in Calcutta from China by air. The statement he made to the Press Correspondents clearly showed how the Congress had, at the time, no clear-cut foreign policy. "You will appreciate," he said, "that it is not proper, for me, or for any one else, to go about giving his private advice on a matter of such grave import. There should be unity of thought, followed by unity of action. In order to have unity of action, there must be a certain unity of thought and full consultation and co-operation. At this stage it is right

and proper that nationalist India should speak with one voice and act in a united way." Thus, the "Red star" of the Indian Revolution seemed for the moment to have lost all fire. It would be quite pertinent to ask why that consultation and co-operation, so essential to achieve unity of thought and unity of action, could not be had before the war actually broke out in Europe and India was dragged into it by the Governor-General over the heads of the people. The country looked eagerly for a lead from the Congress but the Congress was reaping what it had sown at Tripuri. By October 6th, 1939, Hitler had seized Poland and occupied Warsaw ; but the Congress, the highest political organisation of nationalist India had yet to formulate its war policy "by consultations and co-operation."

#### THE CONGRESS INDECISION

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and for five days continuously they behaved like "a School-boys' debating society" and ended by making a useless query—"What are the war aims of the allies"? So many contradictions were inherent in the statement itself that one could hardly believe that it reflected the views of a "homogeneous" body, for the creation of which the chosen "Rashtrapati" of the nation had to resign. In its resolution on "War preparations" adopted in August 1939, the Working Committee had declared "that the past policy of the British Government as well as the recent developments demonstrate abundantly that this government does not stand for freedom and democracy and may at any time betray these ideals. India cannot associate herself with such a government or be asked to give her resources for democratic freedom which is denied to her and which is likely to be betrayed." The opinion expressed herein was so definite and unambiguous that there was no room for any misgiving with regard to the war aims of the allies. The step which the Congress was bound to take in the event of war was also indicated in the same resolution. It expressed its determination to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India so as to prevent the exploitation of Indian resources for imperialist ends. It recorded how the British Government had flouted the declarations of the Congress and the Indian Legislative Assembly against the

despatch of Indian troops to foreign countries and assured the nation that steps would be taken to resist the entanglement of India in a war. In the context of this resolution, the statement made by the Working Committee in September, 1939, betrayed an attitude of back-sliding.

The statement ran as follows :—

“The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the Imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.”

“The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision or attempt to use India's resources, for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish free democratic state in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of Democracy and Freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses, taken away from her.”

“The Committee are aware that the Government of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence

between spoken words, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war-aims were, preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles, and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent states."

"Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very powers who had previously declared their faith in it."

"Again it asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them."

"If the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a constituent Assembly without

external interference, and must guide her own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity."

"The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till their conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a re-organisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world re-organisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom to-day is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster."

"In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves."

"The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is

envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action to-day and give shape to the future."

"War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation."

"The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to victory of real democracy for all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression".

The All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution in the light of the above statement. What followed might be appreciated as an intellectual treat to the nation, but nothing



tangible was done to discharge the heavy responsibility of guiding the people of India in this hour of world crisis.

### POLITICAL PREJUDICE VERSUS POLITICAL PRUDENCE

The homogeneous cabinet of the Gandhian Congress was torn asunder by three different views. Gandhiji's sympathies were all for the allies. As he himself said, "Strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the allies. Willy-nilly this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler". He, therefore, was for giving unconditional support to the British. The Congress High Command could not, however, imbibe the ethical sympathies of Gandhiji. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru indirectly sided with Gandhiji in his support to the allies on the plea of doing nothing "which might alienate the progressive forces of the world." The turmoil in Europe raised within him a conflict between Nehru—the patriot and Nehru—the product of European Liberalism. His heartfelt sympathy for the toiling, starving and half-naked masses of India and his genuine hatred for the state of serfdom account for his readiness to suffer, sacrifice and even to die for India's freedom. But Nehru of Harrow and Cambridge would be equally willing to die for serving the cause of "Progress" and "Democracy" in the world. As Fascism was opposed to some of the pet European notions of "progress", Pandit Nehru was a confirmed anti-fascist. If Britain had sided with Italy and Germany, India would have witnessed a happy combination of Shri Subhas and Pandit Jawaharlal, but in the present war, Pandit Jawaharlal, the "Idealist" had the better of Pandit Jawaharlal, the Indian "Nationalist."

This was not the time for him to judge if Britain herself was not a fascist power; he was content with her lip-homage to the cause of 'Democracy' in the world. Then, again, he had made his commitments to China before the Congress could determine its war-policy. Incidentally, one may venture to point out, that such individual commitments could be made only because the Congress as a body had never attached any importance to its foreign-policy. In sharp contrast to Pandit Nehru's stand, we had the views of Sardar Patel who refused to look beyond

India. Sardar Patel was not worried over the question of India's alliance with foreign powers. He did neither shed tears over the apprehended bombing of Westminster Abbey nor promised, like Pandit Nehru, to do away with his arms to prevent any harm to China ; but he was determined to uphold the authority and the dignity of the Gandhian Congress and would have no nationalist movement unless it had the sanction of Gandhiji.

From outside the Congress Working Committee, Shri Subhas Chandra demanded a bold and courageous lead from the High Command. To him the issue raised by the Viceroy's declaration of war was simple enough. Both on constitutional and political grounds, the imposition of war on India ought to have been opposed and he wanted that nationwide opposition to be organised under the banner of the Indian National Congress, without any delay whatsoever. The only acid test by which he judged his allies was their attitude towards Britain. Such alliances might be mere temporary expedients, but nevertheless, they could always be defended on grounds of political prudence. Unlike Pandit Nehru, he was always in favour of a foreign policy which might serve as a mirror of India's domestic conditions. He had been emphasising the wisdom of such a foreign policy for India ever since his return from Europe but to no purpose. In vain did he try to convince the Congress leaders that the talk of 'progressive forces of the world' was a mere myth. Even the statement issued by the Congress Working Committee could not specify one of such "progressive forces." It condemned Great Britain and France for their past misdeeds and betrayals as showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. It held them responsible for this war as resulting from the imposition of an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. It charged the Anglo-French Powers for having connived at aggression in Manchuria, acquiesced in aggression in Abyssinia—it charged them further for sabotaging the whole system of collective security as envisaged by the League of Nations and for deliberate acts of betrayal of democracy in Spain, Czechoslovakia. The statement, when analysed, gave one the impression that Fascism and Nazism were "more sinned against than sinning." It took the view that the war was the "inevitable consequence of the social and

political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War and yet, for this inevitable consequence they held Nazi Germany responsible. There were, in all these effusions an amount of confused thinking and political bias in favour of Neo-European liberalism which took away even the scholastic value of this historical document. As for its political value, it gave to Great Britain a long time to indulge in pious platitudes, evasive commitments, futile Viceregal negotiations and diplomatic Cripps missions, while exploiting the vast resources of India for war purposes. The Congressmen, who were pledged not to "take any final decision precipitately and without giving every opportunity for the war and peace aims of the British Government to be clarified", could do nothing to prevent this exploitation of India.

America won her independence on the issue of "No taxation without representation". Could not India do the same on a broader issue—the issue of "No imposition of war without India's consent" ?

The Congress was weak because of weak leadership. Its dictator, Gandhiji had declared that the Congress, as it then was, could not 'deliver the goods.'

In the words of Shri Subhas Chandra, "the present world crisis had put Indian leadership to the test and it had been unfortunately found wanting. To-day, our leaders are wobbling and the vacillation has demoralised a section of the leftists as well."

#### ANTI-COMPROMISE CAMPAIGN

The war was raging in the West and Britain was already knee-deep in Europe; but India lay dormant at the feet of British Imperialism. The Congress leaders' frequent running in and out of the Viceregal Lodge and their noble pretension of being allied to the "progressive forces of the world" while playing a slave at home were too repulsive for Shri Subhas Chandras' grains. The passivity of the Congress High Command clearly indicated that they were harbouring the illusion that their offer of conditional co-operation would, in the near future, be acceptable to Britain and, in the meantime, they slept in naive self-confidence. Gandhiji repeatedly called for cessation of all hostilities; and, in developing the niceties of

his doctrine of 'Ahimsa', he had gone to the length of declaring that he would "resist Civil Disobedience with his life." Time and again, the Congress leaders opened negotiations with the Government for a settlement and the astute British politicians, realising 'the weakness of the Congress, tightened their grip on India' with the aid of emergency laws and ordinances. Lord Zetland, the Secretary of State for India, and Lord Linlithgow, the Governor-General and Viceroy, had, with immunity, repudiated all that India stood for nationally and inter-nationally; and they felt themselves strong enough to ignore the Congress fire-eaters. In opposing the Gandhian resolution on National Demand at Tripuri, Shri Sarat Chandra Bose frankly said at the time—"This resolution contains nothing but words, ineffective words which do not lay down any plan of action, words which do not give our people any lead." But, strangely enough, those who demanded "work" instead of 'words' were held guilty of "treasonable conduct" by Pandit Nehru, who condemned the 'Forward Bloc' as "an evil." What will be the history's verdict on all those who, by their indecision, failed to discharge the trust reposed on them by the nation?

The 'Forward Bloc' carried on its 'anti-compromise campaign not without tangible result. The Gandhian Congress, as also its master, Gandhiji were feeling the weight of public opinion which demanded a direct movement, and gradually, they moved forward towards a struggle with British Imperialism. The unique anti-compromise demonstration at the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh, where the Congress also held its session, served as a final warning to the moderate leaders of the Congress of the danger looming in the policy of conciliation with British Imperialism. For the changed temper of the Gandhian politicians at the Ramgarh Session of the Congress the credit must go to the 'Forward Bloc.' Acharya Kripalini, the General Secretary of the Congress, seemed to have caught the infection of the 'Forward Bloc' when he characterised the resignation of the Congress Ministers in the Provinces as the rising of the Congress to "its revolutionary height". The official resolutions of the Congress also vindicated the stand which Shri Subhas Chandra had taken two years before. The relevant portions of the resolutions on war are reproduced below :—

"The Congress considers the declaration by the British Government of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India's resources in this war, as an affront to them, which no self-respecting and freedom loving people can accept or tolerate. The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on her war fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries. Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot, in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the war, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation. The Congress, therefore, strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material."

"The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of Imperialism, and dominion or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure. The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to the other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage....."

"The Congress withdrew the Ministers from the Provinces where the Congress had a majority in order to dissociate India from the war and to enforce the Congress determination to free India from foreign domination. This preliminary step liable naturally be followed by Civil Disobedience, to which the Congress will unhesitatingly resort as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis at which it

## GANDHIJI'S EXTREME VACILLATION

lands has no right to be wrong.

In between 1939 to 1942, Gandhiji moved from the extreme right to the extreme left in Indian politics. We have already referred to his offer of "unconditional support" to the allies and to his policy of non-embarrassment to Britain at war as part of his doctrine of Ahimsa. He had declared in no unmistakable terms that he could not approve of India's winning independence through the weakness of Britain. In February, 1940, he came to realise that there was no meeting ground between the Indian nationalists and the British Imperialists. At Ramgarh, therefore, he felt no compassion for Britain in her peril and echoed the sentiments of the "common man" in India, when in his own inimitable way he said—"A thief has come and turned me out of my house. I will have to fight him and get it back." But there he paused, and, then added, that "before I can do this, I must be prepared." No body can deny the necessity for preparation in a nation's struggle for independence. But, those who ignored the repeated calls made by Shri Subhas Chandra ought to have realised the truth underlying the saying that "to be forewarned is to be forearmed." Moreover, want of preparation might be some excuse for allowing a thief to settle down in one's house, but would that justify any delay, if instead of a thief—a ruffian enters the house and dishonours one's mother? To Shri Subhas Chandra it was not his house but Mother India which was violated by India's forced entry into war.

Gandhian preparation for Civil Disobedience Movement invariably boils down to his reiteration of his faith in Britain. This time, also on January, 20, 1940, Gandhiji wrote in the Harijan—"I am not spoiling for a fight, I am trying to avoid it. Whatever may be true of the members of the Working Committee, I wholly endorse Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose's charge that I am eager to have a compromise with Britain if it can be had with honour. Indeed, Satyagraha demands it.....I have not lost faith in Britain." Gandhiji's insistence on the use of Charka by every soldier under his command neutralised all chances of an immediate struggle. Early in January, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose had felt the danger arising out of the Charka-cult. In a statement to the Press he said: "The political significance that is being given to the spinning now and the manner in which it

has been quietly converted by the Congress "High Command," into a method of political struggle need unequivocal condemnation". The Congress, however, agreed to pay the price of Gandhiji's leadership, and Charka was extolled as a potent political weapon. Gandhiji, thereupon, gave his first word of command—"Every Congress Committee must therefore become a unit of Satyagraha."

All these were heartening symptoms no doubt. As Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel declared on the 8th April, 1940, at Ahmedabad. "A fight is inevitable. The question is when to start the fight. Mahatma Gandhi will not be hustled or bullied into a fight though a cause for fight is being given daily." Who was hustling or bullying Gandhiji into a fight? Clearly, Sardar Patel had Shri Subhas Chandra Bose in his mind. But did Sardar Patel realise that by his own statement he was paying a tribute to the political genius, wisdom and foresight of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose? "A fight is inevitable"! Did not Shri Subhas Chandra Bose say as much in March 1938 at the Haripura Session? It had taken the Sardar and the Congress High Command two long years to realise that a fight was inevitable. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose had sounded a timely note of warning to the people to be ready for a fight. He wanted them in 1938 to be organised for a fight so that the psychological moment might not be lost due to unpreparedness. And, now, that the opponent, through the weakness of the Congress, was "giving cause for a fight daily" and was challenging them to a fight—there came the shameful admission that the organisation was not fit for a struggle. Pandit Nehru had said at the Ramgarh Session that everyone who stood for precipitating a fight was guilty of treasonable conduct. What will be the posterity's verdict on those who had formed an impregnable coterie to defer the "inevitable" struggle till it was doomed from the start to a failure? Unfortunately for India, the General who alone knew the time for this inevitable fight was once again feeling overpowered by his unbounded Spiritualism.

On the 20th April 1940, Gandhiji wrote in Harijan "The Civil Disobedience movement is being delayed for want of preparation."

On the 27th April, 1940, he went a step further and declared



that as far as he could see at present, mass Civil Disobedience was most unlikely because in the face of the lawlessness that prevailed in the country, Civil Disobedience would easily pass for lawlessness.

On the 10th May, 1940, in an interview with the special correspondent of the Times of India, Gandhiji said: "I would welcome a settlement which ensures peace with honour. The Viceroy knows I am always ready...I am not averse to coming to terms with Britain on matters like Defence and Commercial interests."

On the 24th May, 1940, moved by Mr. Amery's declaration that the attainment by India of full and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth is the goal of British policy in India, Gandhiji said: "I would leave no stone unturned to bring about a peaceful and honourable settlement of the present deadlock. While butchery is going on in the West and peaceful homes are being destroyed, I have no heart to say anything publicly in regard to Mr. Amery's statement."

✓ Then again, on the 1st June, 1940, in an article in Harijan he wrote: "If the British Government will not *suo motu* declare India a free country, having the right to determine her own status and constitution, I am of the opinion that we should wait till the heat of the battle in the allied countries subsides and the future is clearer than it is. We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence." He seemed at the moment inclined to wait till the return of peace, when India could make her power felt in the world.

This story of progressive realisation of "Ahimsa" by Gandhiji would be incomplete without a reference to the episode of Gandhiji's severance from the Congress on the ground of its want of faith in perfect non-violence. Gandhiji wanted the Congress to extend his creed of non-violence to the region of national defence, but the Congress Working Committee, at its meeting at Delhi on the 21st June, 1940, pleaded its inability to do so. Gandhiji, who had accepted the responsibility of organising a mass movement on behalf of the Congress, with full knowledge of the imperfections of the general body of Congressmen, wanted to be absolved of all responsibility for Congress activities. Thus the much contemplated Satyagraha and the Satyagraha Committees were buried for the moment.

There ended the first phase of Sardar Patel's "inevitable fight." The General, who was to give the marching order, said on the 21st July, 1940: "Now that I am no longer in the Congress, I may not offer Civil Disobedience even in my own person in its name."

Meanwhile, large scale arrest of Congressmen in all the provinces of India, recruitment of men and requisitioning of properties and a planned exploitation of the resources of India were going on without any effective protest whatsoever.

### 'ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE'

How profound was the change which overtook the Congress at the time. The Non-Co-Operation Movement had made the Congress an organisation of the masses, but the present wavillation of the Congress leaders, over a matter of life and death to the nation, was putting a heavy strain on the people's allegiance to the Congress. Gandhiji's message of "Satyagraha" had imbued a disunited, weak and drooping nation with faith, hope and vitality for a fight and had made him the patriarch of the nation. "He is the one man", says Pandit Nehru very rightly, "who has changed the face of India". Why, then, was he preaching "passivism" at this crucial moment? Was it the inevitable tragedy of the nation's political destiny being left into the hands of a spiritual preceptor—a world preacher? As the European war progressed, Gandhiji grew more and more infatuated with his doctrine of "Ahimsa" or non-violence, and, ultimately forced the Congress to adopt the creed of non-violence in the sphere of national defence. Thus, the Congress had reluctantly to be an organisation for world peace and total disarmament. This completed Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's break with the Congress. All hopes of having Gandhiji at the helm of a mass movement having failed, he undertook upon himself the responsibility of leading the people to a struggle with British Imperialism. He had visualised the prospect of winning India's freedom without firing a shot. For the realisation of his dream, he wanted a united and determined India to take advantage of the international turmoil. As he again said in the Second Session of All-India Forward Bloc Conference—"In order to fully utilise the opportunity which international events have presented to us, we must have sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves. If India

could speak with one voice to-day our demand will indeed be well-nigh irresistible. It follows, as a consequence, that we should try to develop national unity and solidarity to the maximum limit. National Unity will presuppose unity within the Congress and, at the same time, unity between the Congress and other organisations like the Muslim League."

"If we can develop sufficient unity and solidarity among ourselves in good time, we may very well hope that even if the country passes through a struggle and if catastrophic events take place in Europe, the transference of power from the hands of British Imperialism to those of the Indian people will take place in a peaceful manner. It is not necessary that the Indian revolution should be a bloody one, or that it should pass through a period of chaos. On the contrary, it is desirable that it should be as peaceful as possible and a peaceful transition can be ensured if the people are united and are determined to have their freedom." He gave the rallying cry—"All power to the people", and added "India must in this grave crisis think of herself first. If she can win freedom now and then save herself, she will best serve the cause of Humanity. It is for the Indian people to make an immediate demand for the transference of power to them through a Provincial National Government."

The cry of "All Power to the People" galvanised the masses. It at once gave a quietus to all talks of "Dominion Status", and constitutional settlement. The country resounded with the cry of the 'New Leader'—"All Power to the People."

In Bengal, under the inspiration of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the Bengal Provincial Conference recommended the starting of a Satyagraha campaign for securing either the demolition or the removal of the Holwell Monument, which, to the people of Bengal, was a blot on national honour. The monument stood in front of the Writers' Building, the Secretariat of the Government of Bengal, and perpetuated the cock and bull story of a Black Hole tragedy having been perpetrated by Nawab Sirajawdulla which caused the death of one hundred and fifty-four Englishmen by suffocation. According to Mr. Holwell of the East India Company, the Nawab had ordered the detention of 176 Englishmen found in the Fort William in a 18 ft. x 12 ft. prison in the Fort, and the result was that out of 176 prisoners only 16

prisoners survived, and Mr. Holwell erected a memorial to "those unhappy sufferers" at his own expense. Thanks to British propaganda, this horror story invented by Mr. Holwell had gained currency in the world as a historical truth and boys and girls in the schools of India had to cram it out of their text books. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose made a national issue of this 'Black Hole' canard and was determined to uproot this "historical" lie. Youngmen, Hindus and Muslims, rallied under his leadership. Each Satyagrahi was given a tiny hammer with which he was required to strike the monument to give a symbolical expression to his demand for its demolition. A strong contingent of armed police and sergeants made a cordon round the Holwell Monument, and every Satyagrahi, as he approached the Police line, was mercilessly beaten and then arrested.

On July 2nd, 1940, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested at his Calcutta residence at Elgin Road under the Defence of India Act. His arrest gave a further impetus to the Satyagraha Movement. The silent sufferings of the Satyagrahis who were brutally beaten in the most crowded throughfare of Calcutta inflamed the people's mind against the system of "rule by the sword" and the Government had to remove the Holwell Monument. The leader of the movement however, remained in Jail and two fresh charges were framed against him in the Court of the Additional Chief Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta, under the Defence of India Rules for his having committed "a prejudicial act" by delivering a speech in Hindi on April 11, 1939, and also by writing an article entitled "The day of Reckoning" in the "Forward Bloc" of May 18, 1939. The war in Europe was taking a very menacing turn for Great Britain. France as a free nation was completely written off by Nazi aggressors and Great Britain was fast nearing the enemy's range of firing. Once again, the British Government realised that the British Empire could not afford to keep Shri Subhas Chandra outside the prison.

#### AN EXPONENT OF SOUL FORCE

Detention without trial for an indefinite period was no new thing to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. Twice before, he, had been so detained and released only when the Government could no longer take the risk of his life. It was, therefore, crystal clear that, as long as there was no danger to his life,

the government was determined to render him an imbecile spectator of world events of far reaching consequences from behind the prison bars. It was a planned move to make his undying ardour for freedom waste itself in the dark cells of the prison house. The British Government had watched with interest the day to day developments in the Congress in which he alone was the mainspring of opposition to Britain's war-efforts in India. His policy and his country-wide popularity were the main stumbling blocs to a Congress-Government rapprochement. The Congress High Command had done all in its power to isolate him from the people. Even responsible Congressmen had gone to the length of denouncing him as an enemy of the country. But the government allowed him unrestricted freedom as long as his own erst-while colleagues in the Congress were exercising their very powerful influence to wean away the people from him and to persecute him in ways open to them. But, in the months of April and May, 1940, the Congress High Command despaired of success of their moderate policy of conditional co-operation with Great Britain. Thus, when the policy of "non-embarrassment to Great Britain" was going out of the window of "Swaraj Bhaban" and the Congress was approaching its parting of ways with Gandhiji and the policy and programme of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose were looming large before them, the Government decided to put him in the cold storage of prison cells for an indefinite period.

This was no time for a born revolutionary to pass his days in prison. Moreover, after his arrest, the Congress High Command was induced by the sweet phraseology of Whitehall to resume its pourparlers with Lord Linlithgow. What sustains a rebel in the prison is the knowledge that the struggle of which he is a part is going on with unabated zeal despite his imprisonment. The philosophy of passivism and the gospel of world-peace which had seized the Congress at the time were no food for a patriot in prison. He heard of the fall of France and the subsequent news of the aerial invasion of Great Britain. Great events were shaping a new world and he could ill afford to waste his days in prison. But he saw no chance of his release in the near future. He, therefore, decided to go on hungerstrike as a protest against the Government's policy of

detention. In communicating his decision to fast unto death from the 19th November, 1940, to His Excellency the Governor, the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers he wrote inter alia :—

“I have no longer any hope that I shall obtain redress at your hands. I shall, therefore, make but two requests—the second of this will be at the end of this letter. My first request is that this letter be carefully preserved in the archives of the Government, so that it might be available to those of my countrymen who will succeed you in office in future. It contains a message for my countrymen and is, therefore, my political testament.”

“There has been manifest illegality and injustice. Only one explanation can, to my mind, account for such strange conduct viz, that the Government have been pursuing a frankly vindictive policy towards me for reasons that are quite inexplicable.”

“For more than two months, the question has been knocking at the door of my conscience over and over again, as to what I should do in such a predicament.”

“Should I submit to the pressure of circumstances and accept whatever comes my way—or should I protest against what, to me, is unfair, unjust and illegal? After the most mature deliberation I have come to the conclusion that surrender to circumstances is out of the question. It is a more heinous crime to submit to a wrong inflicted than to perpetrate that wrong. So, protest I must.”

“But all these days, protest has been going on and the ordinary methods of protest have all been exhausted. Agitation in the press and on the platform, representations to the government, demands in the Assembly, exploration of legal channels—have not all of these been already tried and found ineffective? Only one method remains—the last weapon in the hands of a prisoner—i.e., hunger strike or fast.”

“In the cold light of logic I have examined the pros and cons of this step and have carefully weighed the loss and gain that will accrue from it. I have no illusion in the matter and I am fully conscious that the immediate, tangible gain will be nil, for I am sufficiently conversant with the behaviour of governments and bureaucracies during such crises. The classic and immortal examples of Terence Macswiney and Jatin Das are floating before my mind's eye at the moment. A system has no heart that could be moved, though it has false sense of prestige to which it always clings.”

“Life under existing conditions is intolerable for me. To purchase one’s continued existence by compromising with illegality and injustice goes against my very grain. I would throw up life itself rather than pay this price. Government are determined to hold me in prison by force. I say in reply, ‘Release me or I shall refuse to live’—and it is for me to decide whether I choose to live or to die ?”

“Though there may be no immediate tangible gain, no sacrifice is ever futile. It is through suffering and sacrifice alone that a cause can flourish and prosper and in every age and clime the eternal law prevails—‘the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church.’”

“In this mortal world, everything perishes and will perish—but ideas, ideals and dreams do not. One individual may die for an idea—but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas, the dreams of one generation are bequeathed to the next. No idea has ever fulfilled itself in this world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice.”

“What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle ? What higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task ? What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over hills and dales and over the broad plains to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant lands ? What higher consummation can life attain than peaceful self-immolation at the altar of one’s cause ?”

“Hence it is evident that nobody can lose through suffering and sacrifice. If he does lose anything of the earth he will gain much more in return, by becoming the heir to a life immortal.”

“This is the technique of the soul. The individual must die, so that the nation may live. To-day I must die so that India may live and may win freedom and glory.”

“To my Countrymen I say—‘Forget not that the greatest curse for a man is to remain a slave. Forget not that the grossest crime is to compromise with injustice and wrong. Remember the eternal law—you must give, if you want to get it. And

remember that the highest virtue is to battle against iniquity, no matter what the cost may be.....”

On the fateful day, the hunger strike commenced and the government dared not interfere with the fast. For six days the fast continued, but on the 5th December, 1940, the iron gates of the Presidency Jail were opened to restore to Bengal her beloved leader. The condition of his health brought silent but indignant tears to every eye.

A very marked change was discernible in the attitude and demeanour of the rebel son of Bengal. Formerly, on being released, even on grounds of health, he had ran to his people by throwing all medical restrictions to the winds. He loved his people and the people showered all their love and respect on him.

What was it then which had this time made him so very detached from his people? Everybody who knew him intimately felt greatly perplexed at the barrier he had created between himself and his people. Another very unusual thing about him was the beard. Whenever he had come out of prison before, he looked like one stepping out of his ante-chamber—so fresh, so clean and so well-shaved. Shri Subhas unlike his political Guru, Deshbandhu Das, never gave up shaving while in prison. Many were alarmed to think that as a sequel to his differences with the Congress High Command, he was planning for total renunciation. After his return from the Tripuri Congress, he had referred to the call of the Himalayas which at times grew irresistible in him. People around him very naturally felt anxious about these changes.

Shri Subhas Chandra's life-long devotion to the cult of Shakti is well known. A man of intense religious belief that he was, (rather, is) religion to him was a matter of individual conscience. Day in and day out, he lived his life before the very eyes of his creator and developed his sublime soul force so assiduously that he lost all sense of fear. Put this time, he felt an urge within him to be in commune with his Creator—the Universal Mother, Chandi, and isolated himself completely from the rest of the world. He spent his days and nights in deep meditation and worshipped the Goddess. Seated on a tiger-skin in front of the picture of Mother Chandi, what boon was it that this brave warrior son of Mother India was seeking?



## HIS MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

More mysterious than this was the news of his disappearance from home. Two cases were pending against him in the court of the Presidency Magistrate and the first physician to the Government of Bengal, who examined him several days before, had found the condition of his heart so weak that he could only advise him to take perfect rest in bed. It was on the 26th January, 1941, when his countrymen were renewing their vow of independence in observance of the Independence Day, that the news spread like wild-fire that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose had mysteriously left his house which was then under the strictest surveillance of the watchdogs of the Intelligence Branch of the police. To his countrymen the news came as a stunning blow since all the circumstances indicated that he meant to renounce the world. On the night of the 28th January, the Calcutta Broadcasting Station announced that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was under arrest at Dhanbad. It was a puzzling news. Could he be so rash as to try to evade the arms of law by hiding himself so near to his home—at Dhanbad? But, no, the next moment it turned out to be a case of mistaken identity. Anxious enquiries were made at Shri Aurabindo's Ashram in Pondichery—but Shri Subhas Chandra was not there. Gradually, the country recovered from the first shock and discarded the theory of renunciation and began to attach political significance to this mysterious act. The belief first found confirmation, when Mr. Eric Cornau Smith, Secretary, to the Government of India, Home Department, announced on the floor of the Assembly that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was either in Rome or in Berlin actively associating with the enemies of the Government.

No clue was given as to how a leader of such public eminence, whom none in India—from princes to fakirs—could fail to recognise, succeeded in crossing the British frontiers so closely guarded by the police and the military in India. The riddle yet remains unsolved. A story of his escape from India has appeared in the Hindusthan Standard of Calcutta in its issue of the 19th January 1946, and we quote it below for all that it is worth. The Hindusthan, Standard's own correspondent at Lahore writes as follows :—

Lahore, Jan. 17.—The story of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's escape was given out 26 days after he had actually left Calcutta.

Netaji left Calcutta about December 13, 1940, by a car and at Burdwan boarded the Punjab Mail in a second class compartment which was reserved for him, according to a story related by one who was put into jail for aiding Netaji in his escape.

Subhas Bose had grown beard and neck-hair. On arrival in Peshawar he looked like a Pathan and stayed with Khan Abbaskhan for six days. From Peshawar Netaji's journey to Kabul was arranged along with a bodyguard, who would leave him at Kabul. From Peshawar Netaji commenced his journey in a Peshawari tonga upto five miles, and from there upto Kabul, he undertook the rest of the journey on foot.

On reaching Kabul, Netaji got acute dysentery and in that condition he fell into the hands of one C. I. D. man but soon got rid of him by giving him a ten-rupee note and a fountain pen which Netaji was carrying at that moment.

From there he contacted Russian Government which refused to receive Subhas Bose on the plea that the Russo-German Alliance was about to break and negotiations between the British Government and Russia were in progress and on that account Russian Government was not prepared to give the British any cause for grievance.

The same source revealed that a certain German having learnt that Subhas Bose wanted to escape at once contacted Berlin and thereafter arrangements were made for him to be flown to Berlin over the Russian territory.

According to this source, Subhas Bose also tried to escape from India in 1939 but could not succeed then. Sometime after his release in the last week of November, 1940, due to illness, Netaji expressed his desire to Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib, a prominent journalist of Calcutta, editor of "Desadarpan", to go to Russia.

Sardar Talib told Netaji that the communist leader, Acharasingh Chinna who was then absconding in connection with Fatehwal Murder case could manage this. After this a Bose-Talib-Chinna meeting was arranged and it was decided that Talib and Chinna would go to the Punjab and bring about unity between the Communists and the Akali Party.

Talib and Chinna held joint consultations with the Punjab Communist leaders and the Akali Party. It was decided that while the communists would arrange to hand over Subhas Bose to Russia the Akalis would also take the Communists into confidence so far

as the management of Gurdawaras was concerned in the Punjab. This decision was not however fulfilled. Both the Communists and the Akali Party fell out, but by that time, Subhas had escaped."

How Subhas Bose escaped from India is also given out by the prominent Akali Party leader, Master Tara Singh in his monthly Organ "Sant Sipahi".

"An essential link of his scheme was growing a beard, says Master Tara Singh in his article. He started neglecting his beard in prison and when Master Tara Singh met him a fortnight before he left India it had assumed considerable proportions.

"In order to let his beard grow unnoticed by the public, Bose sought the seclusion of his room during his last days in Calcutta. That explained the announcement about his illness which was entirely feigned. It was also purposely given out that Bose had acquired a spiritual bent. The camouflage worked well. In fact, Bose was just cultivating a beard.

"This phase lasted about two weeks. In its concluding portion only his two nephews could enter his room. They waited on him, carried his messages and served him his meals.

"It was on the evening of Jan. 16, 1941 that Bose left his residence in a car dressed as a Muslim Maulavi. He wore a fez cap and a big loose shelawar.

"A whole second-class compartment was reserved for him at Howrah Station in the name of a Muslim M.L.A. Bose travelled 60 miles by car to avoid detection by the police before entraining.

"In order to retain the impression that he was still in Calcutta, his meals continued to be served and were eaten by his nephews. This continued for 10 days, and his absence from Calcutta was revealed only when he did not appear in court on Jan. 26.

"Until he reached Peshawar Bose lay on his bunk acting as a sick man. His stay at Peshawar was arranged by Abbas Khan, who has just been released."

Master Tara Singh says that "the Communists who arranged Bose's exit had given him to understand that the Russian Legation in Kabul would help him. In Kabul, Bose was to discover that he had been let down. Bose had to stay for some days in Peshawar before his further journey could be arranged.

"He crossed the Frontier through independent tribal territory after motoring part of the way. He covered many miles on foot

escorted by armed tribesmen who also acted as guides. He went through devious routes before he reached the Kabul Road, where a bus awaited him.

"Accompanied by three Communist colleagues, he arrived at Kabul, where he had a very rough time sleeping in serais and eating badly cooked Kabuli bread. By this time he was really seriously ill. By now police vigilance had increased and frantic efforts were set afoot both in India and Kabul to trace him. He had many narrow escapes. He took refuge in the house of Uttam Chand, an Indian radio dealer, who was later arrested and extradited to Peshawar.

#### HE SOUGHT RUSSIAN AID

"Bose's Russian contacts failed and he was compelled to seek the support of the German and Italian Legations."

According to Master Tara Singh, Bose "did this reluctantly for his original plan was to seek only Russian help, but this was refused by Moscow as Anglo-Russian relations had suddenly improved at that juncture.

"The German Legation sought the permission of Hitler, who welcomed the idea and instructed his Kabul agents to arrange Bose's journey to Berlin. Bose was given a fictitious Italian passport and flown across. But before he entered the plane Bose shaved his beard and moustache and donned European dress."

How Shri Subhas Chandra stayed in Kabul incognito prior to his departure by air for Berlin through Russia is revealed by Lala Uttamchand himself, who has been recently released after four year's detention in British India.

Interviewed by the Peshawar correspondent of the "Daily Milap", Lala Uttam Chand, who claims the privilege of having served as Subhas Bose's host in Kabul, said: "When Netaji arrived in Kabul from Peshawar via Mohamand territory he stayed in a lorry-drivers' inn. He was dressed in Pathan style, was wearing a beard and fez. He had a companion with him from Peshawar who acted as his interpreter. On their arrival in Kabul, a member of the Afghan Intelligence staff attempted to interrogate Netaji but his companion satisfied the policeman that he was none but a deaf and dumb Pathan. Netaji, however, had to part with his wrist watch to please the policeman.

Lala Uttam Chand said : "Netaji somehow or other came to know of my whereabouts, and contacted me. When he took me into his confidence, I took him to my house and kept him there for 48 days after which he left for Berlin via Russia."

"Sometime afterward", added Lala Uttamchand, "the Kabul police served a notice on me directing me to leave Kabul within 48 hours. As it was not possible for me to wind up my business within this short time I had to defy the order, therefore I was arrested and deported from Afghanistan penniless. I came to my house in Peshawar and stayed there for a night but was arrested by the C. I. D. next morning. I was kept for about four months in various police stations in the Frontier Province and thereafter I was taken to Lahore Fort where I was detained for about six months. From Lahore Fort I was taken to other jails in the Punjab and was kept there for about four years during which period I lost my health with the result that the Government had to release me."

### HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE AXIS

On his arrival at Berlin, Shri Subhas Chandra settled down to give effect to his plan of action. What a tremendous responsibility it was for one single man to plan for the liberation of 40 crores of Indians ? He was known to a few in Berlin when he arrived but was he not the very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of 400 millions of his people groaning in chains ? His physical isolation from his people never oppressed him ; he was conscious of the fundamental unity in mind and spirit between him and the dumb millions of India. So long as the air could carry his voice to the Indian ears, he felt confident of having from the soil of his birth whatever support he wanted for the liberation of his motherland. He, therefore, felt no anxiety to dispel from the people's mind whatever doubts were purposely created by adverse propaganda against him. He did not make his presence in Berlin known to the Indian people till the arrival of the crucial moment. For the time being, therefore, his whereabouts, remained a mystery and he applied his mind to the task before him,

(His first work was to effect an alliance with the anti-British front in the world.) Japan had declared war immediately before he started for Berlin and he now wanted to join the Axis

powers) consisting of Germany, Italy and Japan. But in what capacity was he to join them ? He certainly could not speak on behalf of the Indian National Congress, which in the first place, was pledged to non-violence, and, secondly, hostile to the Axis. The 'Forward Bloc'—his own party—was a wheel within the bigger wheel of the Congress, and, as such, could not go against the fundamentals of the Congress policy. Being alone, his alliance with the Axis could not mean any accretion to the military strength of the Axis. He was conscious of these limitations, but he was equally determined that his alliance with the Axis powers must be on a footing of equality, without which, he would be merely an "Axis Agent." He had left home with God overhead, and in these critical days, it was the faith in his cause—the cause of India's Independence—which sustained him.

Placed in that position, a lesser man might have bargained, however wrongly, for his country's freedom at the cost of his personal honour and dignity. But Shri Subhas Chandra Bose knew full well that freedom could not be had through bargaining and in all his dealings with foreign powers he considered himself to be the custodian of his country's honour and dignity. By his supreme act of renunciation for the country's cause, he had made himself so crystal clear that those who came to deal with him knew full well that he could agree to nothing which his conscience could not sanction as a right move towards his country's freedom. The personality which the British could neither break nor bend at once commanded the respect and admiration of all the groups in the Axis Camp. He appeared to them not as a supplicant but as one, who, throughout his life had scored many victories over the British in whom the Axis powers had then a tough enemy to fight. The fact that he had fought against British imperialism without arms in India and had proved unconquerable at once made him an object of great adoration. They pledged their unconditional support to him and sought his counsel. We have it from the lips of Indians in Berlin that Shri Subhas Chandra, by his very dignified bearing, raised the Indians in the estimation of the Germans and their Fuehrer, Herr Hitler. Shri Shantaram Vishnu Samanta, who joined the European wing of the Azad Hind Fauj, in course of a Press interview in India, said : "Hitler addressed us at a meeting organised in the Azad Hind Fauj Headquarters at Dresden. Hitler

said 'You are fortunate to belong to the country of rich culture and huge manpower. I am pleased to see you and your Netaji in spirits to liberate your country. Your Netaji's value is greater than mine. I am a leader of 8 crores of Germans. Your Netaji is the leader of 40 crores of Indians. In all the ways he is a much greater leader and a general than me. I salute him. Germans salute him'.

In fact, Germany, Italy and Japan received him cordially and promised him all help. He received their help as openly as it was offered because he felt convinced that no country could make itself free from the yoke of a firmly established alien rule without external aid.

( In Germany, he first received military training. The story goes that while under training he worked in different European fronts with German military experts like Field Marshall Rommel and others. ) Be that as it may, we have it directly from Major-General Shah Nawaz that while in East Asia, the best Generals of the Government of Nippon used to bring to him plans of their military strategy and he found mistakes in them and made alterations which the Japanese Generals were obliged to accept. He devoted his days and nights for preparing himself for that military leadership which was to be his role in the days to come.

' He had, from 1921, formed many quasi-military units like the Congress Volunteer Corps; but this army, which he was to lead now, was to challenge, on the score of violence, the might of the most up-to-date militarised nations of the world. The 'Hero' of many a non-violent battles in India who had calmly suffered physical violence, donned the military uniform to speak to the Anglo-Americans in the only language they understand—the language of the "Guns" and "Cannons". It was on January, 26, 1942, just a year after the news of his disappearance from home was publicly announced, that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose succeeded in forming an Azad Hind Fauj in Germany. The 26th of January, as said before, is observed all over India as the "Independence Day", when the vow of independence is solemnly re-affirmed by Indians in millions, "We believe", so runs the pledge of India's Independence "that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people,

to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence." The remaining portion of the pledge refers to the means recommended by the Congress for the attainment of Purna Swaraj, the weapons of a non-violent fight for freedom. It was the farsighted patriotism of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose which was primarily responsible for pledging India to the goal of Complete Independence at the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress in 1930, and in 1942, he formed the 'Azad Hind Fauj' in Berlin to redeem that pledge by a different means. The experience of these twelve years in India and the world situation, as it developed since the declaration of the war, led him to believe, most passionately, that non-violent struggle within India must be supplemented by violent external pressure from the borders of India and, if required, the force of an imperialist government must be met by force organised outside India. To him there was no difference between faith and work and he acted in the light of his belief. Many in India think that by forming the 'Azad Hind Fauj' Netaji Subhas Chandra had abjured his former belief in non-violence as a means of India's struggle. In fact, however, Netaji never asked either the Congress or the Indian people to adopt the course of violence within India to achieve India's independence. He was a practical politician and not an orthodox theorist. He recognised the fact that "India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj by following non-violent, legitimate methods." As a rationalist he recognised the limitations of the doctrine of non-violence. Every system of alien rule rests partly on the will of the subjects and partly on force, and, except under exceptional



circumstances, "force" has always to be ousted by "force." Hence, non-violence, to Shri Subhas, was never a creed while he was in India. He accepted it on grounds of expediency and political prudence and worked it as the best policy in India for mobilising an unarmed people in a nationwide struggle: If an Indian struggle were organised and launched in 1939, as he had demanded, the policy might have achieved its end, namely, "Complete Independence." But, as he reviewed the situation in 1941, he found that the British had completely recovered from the 'fear-complex' which had seized them during the days of Chamberlain and the empty arsenals of the so-called democracies of the west were growing full every day and a mere non-violent movement of resistance in India was not calculated to bring sufficient pressure on the British to quit India. The Independence of India was his goal and the strategy that appealed to him most was that of co-ordinating the activities of the Azad Hind Fauj outside India with the non-violent struggle within India. It is not for us to say whether he was right or wrong in conceiving of these two different phases of one common national struggle for freedom, (but we do say that the Azad Hind movement started by Netaji was in no way antagonistic to the non-violent Congress movement in India. The Congress, he had himself declared, was the flesh of his flesh and the bone of his bones, and, not for a single day did he think of himself as anything but a "Congressman.") We are told by C. Hagiwara, a Japanese journalist, that at a Press Conference at Manila, late in 1943, Netaji himself characterised his and Gandhiji's political ideas as "different roads toward the same simple goal". Mr Hagiwara further said that "Bose, unlike Gandhi, made it clear that he believed that military action would stir the blood and passion of his colleagues as well as the mass of India. He believed that such action was necessary for the ultimate success of the Indian emancipation movement, even if he himself should die miserably of failure. According to Bose, Gandhi told him that he would not join his operations as he could not believe in the success of military action against the British." He never concealed from Gandhiji his faith in violence, though as a Congressman,

he had always remained non-violent within India. But, despite such fundamental differences with Gandhiji, Netaji maintained the highest reverence for Gandhiji, and, even when acting as the Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, he, addressing Gandhiji said, "Father of our Nation! In this holy war for India's liberation, we ask your blessing and good wishes."

The sentiments expressed by Netaji were reciprocated by Gandhiji in equally affectionate vein. "My relations with Subhas Babu were always of the purest and best. I always knew his capacity for sacrifice. But a full knowledge of his resourcefulness, soldiership and organising ability came to me only after his escape from India. The difference of outlook between him and me as to the means of attaining our common goal is too well known for comment."—said Gandhiji.

### HIS DIVINE OPTIMISM

(Optimism is a great motive force in politics. He was a robust optimist who could not be depressed by the dangers and difficulties of the way.) Imagine within yourself an ardent realist seated on a tiger-skin in a lonely room at Elgin Road in Calcutta and visualising the prospects of a National Army, big enough to give battles to the Anglo-Americans at the front. He was not made of the stuff which could indulge in day-dreams. How could he then hope to build a great edifice of freedom out of nothing? (His optimism, which was a spark of the divine inspiration within him, led him to believe that he could achieve more by escaping out of India than by remaining in India, where the Government seemed bent on keeping him in prison during the duration of the war.) What was it, then, that he had hoped to accomplish by an all-round renunciation of all that he had in India? (Before his very eyes a world war was being waged for no other purpose than territorial aggrandisement and he was shocked to see the colossal waste of human lives and resources for no earthly good whatsoever. He found in this war an opportunity to advance the cause of the political revolution, and, in the small nations of Europe and Asia, he found the materials for that revolution.) Both the Axis and the Allied Powers were fighting their battles for territorial acquisition, and, even Russia could not

keep herself free from the virus of Imperialism. (In such a world devoid of idealism, he wanted to hold aloft the Flag of Freedom for the enslaved humanity.) The small nations of Europe were every day falling a prey to the greed of the Imperialist powers and his bold stand for national liberation was the most significant protest against the war-ideals of both the Axis and the Allied Nations. In a dark war-stricken world which measured everything by the scale of military strength, he knew his own limitations, but it was the spiritual protest of the weak and the oppressed against the barbarity of the strong that he wanted to lodge in the family of nations. He was not such a visionary as to believe that his protest would have any sobering effect on the militarists who were seeking to divide the world among themselves; but he hoped to rally the dormant powers of the small and weak nations who could be roused to action only by his revolutionary endeavours. Looked at from the point of view of India, he was seeking to establish a golden link between her and all the small, weak and exploited nations of the world and to create a unique and unprecedented upsurge of passion for freedom.

(Thus, by leaving the borders of India, he expanded his sphere of activity to the world abroad, and the single-handed manner in which he worked up that revolution with pre-eminent success in Asia, entitles him to be honoured as the Master Revolutionary of all ages.) In Europe, his success was of a limited nature, as he had to leave the European front because of quick and unexpected developments in Asia. In Asia, the response from every quarter except the China of Generalissimo Chiang-Ki-Shek was phenomenal. To Chiang-Ki-Shek he made impassioned appeals but the General was then so very tightly sandwiched by England and America that he failed to realise the significance of his message or the implication of the Revolution that was dawning on Asia under Netaji's leadership.

#### ASIATIC REVOLUTION—THE CROWN OF SUCCESS

The Azad Hind Fauj came in battle-array to challenge the might of the imperialist powers as the sharp-shooters and the light-troops of a new age heralding the freedom of all Asiatic Nations from the domination of Imperialist powers. By their sacri-

fice, courage and fortitude, they drew the oppressed nations of Asia under their banner of revolt.) Next to the Azad Hind Fauj has come the elephantine body of 145,000,000 people of East Asia. The whole of Dutch East Indies, French Indo-China, Ceylon, Malaya and Burma to-day witness unprecedented tidal waves of revolt against every kind of serfdom. The Indonessian movement is by no means an isolated phenomenon; it is the continuation of the same fight which the Azad Hind Fauj fought against the Anglo-Americans. The employment of British troops and Indian troops, under the command of the British Government, to restore Dutch Imperialism in Indonessia ought to be very convincing proof of the fact that there are two races in Asia to-day—"the Ruler" and "the Ruled," or call them, "the Exploiter" and "the Exploited" or "the Looters" and "the Loot." Asia to-day proclaims before the world that these two races—so antagonistic to each other—cannot both grow together on her soil and the alien elements must quit so that the children of the soil may live, grow and prosper.

The explosive demonstrations which are spreading from Indonesia, French Indo-china, Burma, Malaya, Ceylon to India, Iran, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, and even in Tripolitania, Algeria and Morocco are the manifestations of one organic whole which is animated by one burning desire to overthrow every species of European domination or control. Like the fundamental unity of purpose underlying the British and the Dutch Imperialism which prompts them to act together, the countries in Asia, and even in portions of Africa, have grown conscious of the fundamental unity of all nationalist movements and they are also planning to act together. This organic unity has grown so strong that even 'Pravda', the most influential organ of Soviet Russia, has been driven to the conclusion that "for the Colonial world, the old times have gone for ever". Professor Albert Einstein, the world famous scientist and savant, in his statement before the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine denounced the Colonial powers of Western Europe. He said, "Trouble-making is a British enterprise. It is my impression that Palestine is a kind of a small model of India". If "trouble-making is a British enterprise", Asia is determined to complete the liquidation of such parasitic enterprise—the

game of Imperialism. The Asiatic revolution is now a reality and statesmen can henceforth ignore it at their own peril.

But, wherefrom has Asia gained this "Spirit of Revolt" and confidence in her strength? "Asia for the Asiatics", was the slogan raised by Japan, and, how is it that though Japan to-day is completely defeated, disgraced and doomed for decades, her mission is fast nearing the day of fulfilment? During the war, the whole of Asia, barring the Japanese Empire, was a vast store-house for feeding the Anglo-American war machinery. Britain has emerged out of the war as a triumphant power but paradoxically enough, after her victory, she finds her Asiatic possessions slipping out of her hands. Various explanations may be suggested to solve this paradox, but the one proximate cause of this sudden and spontaneous uprising of an urge for complete freedom in the Asiatic countries is to be found in the unique example of the death-defying patriotism of the men and women of the Azad Hind Fauj, who had correctly assessed the price of freedom and were ever ready to give more and more and yet more blood as "the price of freedom." The warriors in this Army of Fakirs who had, from their Netaji, direct appointment with death, yearned more to shed their own blood than to spill others' blood. They went to the front more to die for the cause of freedom than to kill the adversary and it is this spirit of supreme self-immolation generated by men well-trained in the art of man-killing which permeates the whole of Asia to-day and has rendered the British terror machines obsolete and futile. Self-immolation without causing a scratch to one's enemy is the ideal of non-violence. As contra-distinguished from this, there is the ideal of violent warfare—the ideal of self-preservation by large scale man-slaughter. In the spirit of the Azad Hind Fauj we have almost a synthesis of these two extreme ideals in so far as the men belonging to the Fauj were kept in readiness to die for freedom—but to die only after demonstrating that they also knew how to kill—for it is the knack for man-killing that these opponents honour and appreciate. The non-violent suffering is often ascribed to absolute helplessness of the sufferer—but the attitude and the outlook of the Azad Hind men and women speak of the "Non-violence of the Brave." Asia, to-day is not afraid of the Atom Bomb because she is prepared to give "blood—blood and more blood" as the price of Freedom. Moreover, the fact

that India is the centre of the present Asiatic revolution confirms the belief that the Revolution is the immediate sequel to the Azad Hind Movement in the East and has been caused by it.

It is perplexing to hear from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is keenly alive to the on-coming Asiatic Revolution, that the Azad Hind Movement has failed. Pandit Nehru, more than anybody else, knows that in a national struggle energy is never lost—it only undergoes transforination and gains in strength. The Azad Hind Movement has not failed—it has perfected the Indian Revolution and has worked up an Asiatic Revolution to which the Indian Revolution is inextricably linked. Asia, under the leadership of India, has acquired to-day the highest form of freedom—freedom from fear, or should we call it, Spiritual Freedom. Can political freedom be far behind this Spiritual freedom? For the realisation of this Asiatic ideal one can no longer look to “Yellow Asia”, which has faded away. Will “Red Asia” take the lead?

The future lies before us—uncertain in matters of details but radiant with the prospects of freedom. India looks eagerly to the guidance of that “kindly light” which alone can make this transition from Serfdom to Freedom smooth and peaceful. Whether that light comes from the Sabarmati or from the Soviet, the name of Netaji shall always remain a name to conjure with. He, whom we have described, at the outset, as the child of the Renaissance, stands out as the Master-Revolutionary in the East. “Loin-cloth” in India has become the symbol of self-renunciation. Fond of form and ceremony, meticulously dressed, either in mufti or in uniform, Netaji’s life is his only “loin-cloth”. The success of the on-coming Revolution in Asia would be the crowning glory of Netaji’s life. Long Live Netaji!

**PART II**  
**HISTORY OF**  
**AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT**

**"Ay, call it holy ground,**

**The soil where first they trod,**

**They have left unstained what there they found—**

**Freedom to worship God"**







NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA' BOSE

# HISTORY OF AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT

## GENESIS OF THE I. N. A.

On February 15, 1942, Singapore fell before the land was reached by the Japanese. In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill, "it was a heavy and far reaching defeat" for the British. But what did this surrender mean to the Indian troops whom the British had carried with them to fight against the Japanese and to the three millions of Indians in the South East Asia? On February 17, 1942, the Indian troops were surrendered to the Japanese. Here is Subedar-Major Babu Ram's graphic account of the "Surrender Ceremony" narrated before the First Court Martial trial of the I. N. A. Officers. "On the evening of February 15, when his battalion was near Bidadari, an order was received saying Singapore had been surrendered to the enemy and that all the arms of the battalion would be collected. The arms were collected and taken away by the Japanese on February 17, when all Indian troops were sent to Bidadari P. O. W. Camp. The same day they were ordered to collect at Farrar Park, when his battalion, which was under the command of Capt. M. Z. Kiani, went to Farrar Park where many prisoners of war had already assembled and more continued to come in. By about 3 P. M., there were 50,000 prisoners of war. In a building in the Park he saw a lot of officers, including a British Officer, Lt. Col. Hunt, and some Japanese and Indian Army officers. The Indian Army Officers were dressed in Indian Army uniform and had white arm bands on their shirt sleeves marked "I". Col. Hunt spoke through a microphone and ordered the prisoners of war to stand to attention. He then proclaimed that, as a representative of the British Government, he handed them over to the Japanese as prisoners of war. He advised them to obey the orders of the Japanese in the same way as they had obeyed the British Government; otherwise, he said, they would be punished. Col. Hunt went back after handing over certain papers to Major Fujiwara, a Japanese officer. Major Fujiwara next came to the microphone and made a speech in Japanese, which was translated into English and re-translated into Hindusthani. Major Fujiwara said that he had taken them over as a representative of the Japanese. His government

was not prepared to keep them prisoners. So far the Japanese were concerned, they were free. The Japanese were short of rations and they would have to do some fatigues. Major Fujiwara added, "I hand you over to Capt. Mohan Singh, who will be your Supreme Commander, and you will have to obey his orders." Capt. Mohan Singh, who spoke next, said: "In the Malayan campaign, the Indian Army had not been given a chance to fight, because the campaign was so short. Moreover, there were no supporting arms and aeroplanes to help the Infantry. As a matter of fact, the Indian Army had been let down. Now is the time for the Indians to fight for their Independence. So far India has been lacking an armed force of its own but here is a chance of raising an armed force to fight for India's liberation. The British Government have handed you over to the Japanese. The Japanese are not prepared to keep you as prisoners as they are short of rations. We are forming an Indian National Army which will fight to free India."

The proclamation of Capt. Mohan Singh was hailed with delight. Forsaken by those whom they were legally bound to obey, the Indian troops found their moral support and comfort in the allegiance to their motherland. The situation was fraught with danger. The manner of Col Hunt's surrender in the name of His Majesty's Government made them liable to be exploited by the Japanese in furtherance of their Imperialist designs. They were aware of the inhuman atrocities committed by the Japanese on the Chinese, the Anglo-Indians and the Malaysians in Malaya. Were the Indian soldiers, reputed for the valour of their arms, going to be mute spectators of the humiliation and torture of the whole Indian Community in Singapore? Such were the questions which troubled the Senior Officers of the Indian Army abandoned by the British at Singapore. They realised the great weight which an army of their own was likely to have over the Japanese. In that utterly helpless condition, these fighting forces carefully weighed the pros and cons of raising an army thoroughly manned, officered and controlled by Indians and recruited for the ulterior object of liberating India. As Capt. R. M. Arshad, the Chief of the Staff, I. N. A. said "under the circumstances, we all owed allegiance to the country".

Capt. Mohan Singh had indicated the trend of his mind to his compatriots at Farrar Park. But, conscious as he was of the Japanese menace, he moved cautiously. He held a preliminary discussion

with Indians in Malaya and Burma at a meeting at Singapore held on March 9th and 10th, 1942. Shri Rashbehari Bose, the Indian exile in Japan for the last twenty-five years, attended the meeting and invited a conference at Tokyo. Accordingly, a conference was held at Tokyo which continued its sittings from the 28th to 30th March, 1942, and the delegates present there decided to form an Indian Independence League to organise an Indian Independence Movement in East Asia. It was resolved that "Independence—complete and free from foreign domination, interference and control of whatever nature—shall be the object of the movement". The conference further resolved that "military action against India will be taken only by the Indian National Army and under the command of Indians, together with such military naval and air co-operation as may be requisitioned from the Japanese authorities by the Council of Action of the Indian Independence League to be formed, and, that the framing of the future constitution of India will be left entirely to the representatives of the people of India". Thus, the safeguards to Indian Independence were clearly laid down by the Tokyo Conference and wide circulation was given to the resolutions to elicit Indian opinion on them. It was left to the Bangkok Conference held for nine consecutive days beginning from the 15th June, 1942, to lay the foundation of the Indian Independence League. The Conference was attended by Indian delegates from Japan, Manchuko, Hongkong, Burma, Borneo, Java, Malaya and Thailand. Shri Rashbehari Bose was elected the President of the Indian Independence League and Singapore was made its Headquarters. The conference also formed a Central Council of Action with Shri Rashbehari Bose as President and Shri Menon, Shri Raghavan and Shri Goha as civilian members and Capt. Mohan Singh, Lt. Col Gilani and Lt. Bhonsle as military personnel. The Indian Independence League was authorised to recruit men and collect money and clothes for the Indian National Army.

It was further decided that the Indian National Army, when raised, would be under the command of Capt. Mohan Singh and that "the would be Indian Government" would pay in cash the price of all arms, ammunition and equipment which would be supplied by the Japanese Government.

The three other important resolutions adopted by the conference were as follows :—

(1) To raise an Indian National Army from the Indian Troop in East Asia as well as from Indian Civilians.

(2) To control and direct the programme and plan of action of the Indian Independence movement and to bring them in line with the aims and intentions of the Indian National Congress.

(3) To demand from the Japanese Government a further clarification of their policy towards this movement as well as towards India.

Thus, slowly and cautiously, was the soil prepared for the growth of a revolutionary army—an army that would work for the liberation of 40 crores of Indians. Within a short time, the Indian Independence League had its branches in Burma, Thailand, Malaya and Singapore, Indo-China, Java, Sumatra, Phillippines, Shanghai, Hongkong and Japan. In September, 1942, the First Indian National Army was formally formed and very soon its strength rose to 10,000.

The Composition of the Army consisted of (a) Headquarters (b) Hindustani Field Group, (c) Sherdil Guerilla Group consisting of Gandhi Guerilla Regiment, Azad Guerilla Regiment, and Nehru Guerilla Regiment. (d) Special Service Group (e) Intelligence Group (f) Re-inforcement Group. The Hindustani Field Group consisted of the Headquarters One, Two, and Three Infantry Battalions, I.A.F.C. Battalion, one heavy Gun Battalion, Number one Engineer Company, Number one Signal Company, Number one Medical Company and Number One T. P. T. Company.

The whole of the Army was trained by Indian Officers. The scale of pay of these officers were as follows:—Lieutenant Rs. 80/-, Captain Rs. 125/-, Major Rs. 180/- in Malaya and Rs. 230/- to 235/- in Burma, Lieutenant-Colonel Rs. 325/- and Colonel Rs. 400/- per month.

The weapons used by the I.N.A. were rifles, bayonets, pistols, armoured cars and carriers and not one of them was Japanese.

The Uniform of the Indian Army were made use of by I. N. A. personnel—but each carried his distinctive I.N.A. badge—the colours of the Indian National Congress, namely, Saffron, White and Green.

The ration, in the front, was 10 to 11 ounces of rice. There was, however, no fixed scale of rations and sometimes there was no ration at all, and the people had to go to the jungles in search of bananas or whatever they got.

Despite these hardships, by the month of September, 1942, there were 15,000 men under training and 20 thousand surplus recruits awaiting their chances.

The I. N. A. had its own Act known as the Indian National Army Act and, for acts of gross indiscipline, whipping was one of the lawful modes of punishment.

#### AN ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS

(The I. N. A. from the very start, was maintained as an army of Volunteers.) This voluntary character was very seriously challenged by the Advocate-General of India, Mr. N. P. Engineer, before the Court-Martial. In his opening address he said, "Those who resisted to join the I. N. A. were removed to concentration camps. No food was given to them and such food as was given was extremely bad. No medical aid was given at all". Portions of the evidence by which the learned Advocate-General of India sought to substantiate his contentions are quoted below :—

Lt. D. C. Nag, the First Prosecution Witness, said, in course of his examination-in-chief: "Witness and others who refused to join the I. N. A. were taken by a Japanese officer, Major Ogwa, —to a separation Camp on Orchard Grove in Singapore. From there they were taken to another Separation Camp at Jhor Baru. After sometime in that camp, witness was removed to Bidadari Hospital for treatment. After he had stayed for a month in that Hospital, the commanding officer of the Hospital said that patients, who were still not willing to remain in the I. N. A. Camp, were to be sent to solitary camp, where there was no provision for any treatment. As he could not afford to forego treatment, witness rejoined the I. N. A. in April 1943.

Cross-examined by Shri Bhulabhai Desai, Senior Counsel for the Defence, Lt. Nag said that he held two offices, one as Judge-Advocate General and the other as Deputy Adjutant-General. Further cross-examined, witness said that after the British surrender at Singapore on February 15, 1942, there were Neesoon, Bidadari, Seletar and Buller Camps. Subsequently, there was another camp at Kranji and camps in one or two other places. There were about 500 to 700 beds in each hospital. Witness was under treatment in Bidadari Hospital in March, 1943.

Mr. Desai : You told the court that you consented to remain.

in the second I. N. A. because you were afraid you would otherwise be removed from Bidadari Hospital to Seletar. You now say that there was a hospital also at Seletar.

Witness : I was told that I was going to a camp at Seletar, which had no hospital.

Mr. Desai : There was only one hospital in Seletar where any P. O. W. could be admitted ?

Witness : Yes.

Mr. Desai : So it is quite incorrect to say that you were going to be sent to Seletar Camp where there was no provision for any treatment ?

Witness : No. We were not going to be sent to hospital, although we were patients.

Mr. Desai : Is it this that the patients who were not willing to remain in the I. N. A. were to be sent to Seletar Camp where there was no provision for treatment ?

Witness : That is what I said.

Mr. Desai : What do you mean by it ? There was a hospital which was open to any P. O. W.

Witness : Normally patients would have been sent to hospital but I was told that we were not going to be sent to hospital.

Mr. Desai : You suggest that you were specially selected for not being sent to hospital.

Witness : No. It applied to everybody. All the patients were told at Bidadari that unless they were willing to continue in the I.N.A. they would be sent to Seletar Camp and not to hospital.

Judge-Advocate : Did you join the I. N. A. voluntarily after you left hospital at Bidadari ?

Witness : No.

Judge-Advocate : After you had joined, did you remain voluntarily ?

Witness : Yes.

An interesting portion of Lt. Nag's evidence is quoted below to be read in this connection :

Mr. Desai : Were you generally in the confidence of Subhas Bose ?

Witness : I had no direct touch with him.

Mr. Desai : Do you mean that during the time you functioned, you never had any interview or conversation with him ?



Witness : I had conversations with him on two occasions in connection with some disciplinary cases.

Mr. Desai : Did you live in the same house with Subhas Bose at Maymyo in April 1944 ?

Witness : Yes.

Mr. Desai : When did your talk with Subhas Bose take place ?

Witness : Sometime in 1944 after April. I remember one occasion on May, 1944.

Mr. Desai : You lived with him. Did you dine with him ?

Witness : Yes.

Mr. Desai : Was it a completely silent performance ?

Witness : No. But I had no opportunity of having a conversation with him.

Regarding the allegation of discrimination in the matter of food, we have the evidence of Capt. Dhargalkar, Prosecution Witness No 2, who, asked by Mr. Desai, if he had any complaint to make about food or anything else, apart from arrest, replied in the negative.

The fourth Prosecution witness, Jamadar Istaf Razak, deposed as follows :—

Cross-examined by Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, witness said that “the bad conditions of living which he had described earlier were due to the Japanese. It was in January or February that he saw Capt. Shah Nawaz Khan for the first time when he came to Port Dixon Camp to collect Volunteers.

Mr. Desai : You were quite clear that he left everyone free choice to join or not to join the I. N. A ?

Witness : Yes, I am quite clear. Capt. Shah Nawaz left it open to everybody to join the I. N. A. or not.

The Court put a question about what happened after Bose's speech at Mingaladon, in which he said, that those who did not want to go to the front could stay behind. “Did anyone stay behind” ? asked the Court.

Witness : Bose inspected the regiment and asked if anybody wished to stay behind. “Nobody stayed behind”.

In striking opposition to the above, we have the evidence of Havildar Mohammed Sarwan, who, describing the conditions in the Kranji Camp, said : “One day two V. C. O's and a party of

Sikh guards came to the Camp and ordered them to fall in line and said that they should all join the I. N. A. The prisoners included their Maṅlavi. The Guard Commandant ordered that those who wanted to join the I. N. A. should fall in on the other side. None of the prisoners volunteered. Thereupon, the Jamadar and the Subedar took out their pistols and started firing at us and ordered the Sikh guards also to fire on us. Approximately, the strength of the Guards were 14. They also started firing. Then one of the guards who was firing was hit on the head with a spade and he fell dead on the spot. His head was split open. For 15 minutes they continued firing.

Cross-examined by Mr. Desai, witness said that two of them were killed and three wounded as the result of 15 minutes continuous firing.

Mr. Desai further asked : Did these people fire on you unprovoked ?

Witness : They only started firing on us because we refused to join the I. N. A.

Mr. Desai : Was there any conversation between the guards and your men before they fired ?

Witness : No.

Mr. Desai : They just came in and you did nothing and they started firing ?

Witness : We were asked to fall in and they asked us to join the I. N. A., when we refused, they started firing."

It is not for us to weigh the evidence or to determine their evidentiary value. Some of the accounts given by the Prosecution witnesses may not be worthy of any credence at all, as for example, the evidence of Sepoy Saidullah Khan, who confessed before the Court-martial that he had been told what evidence to give in the case and to memorise dates.

### CRISIS IN THE I. N. A.

(In December 1942, the I. N. A. was faced with a great crisis. Japan had, in the early days of the Indian Independence movement, underestimated the strength of these homeless patriots, who had formed themselves into I. N. A. Their strength lay not in their numbers but in their self-less character.) Resolutely,

they foiled the sinister attempts of Japan to make use of Indian men and materials for purposes other than the freedom of India. Col. Loganandan, the Cabinet Minister of Azad Hind Government, here gives us his own views on the crisis. He says :—"The relations between Capt. Mohan Singh, G. O. C. of I. N. A. and Mr. Rash Behari Bose, President, Indian Independence League and Chairman, Council of Action, were not very happy. On his personal knowledge, he thought that Mr. Rash Behari Bose, having lived so long with the Japanese, was inclined to be guided and controlled by them, whereas Capt. Mohan Singh felt that the Japanese should be dealt with a firmer hand than what Mr. Rash Behari Bose would be able to do. The I. N. A. was a branch of the Independence League. As Capt. Mohan Singh was not very happy with Rash Behari Bose, he took a lot of responsibility upon his own shoulder, in dealing with the Japanese. At the time of the crisis, Mohan Singh used to ask some of the senior officer to meet him in his Bungalow, and he (Col Loganandan) was one of them. Capt. Mohan Singh explained to them that the Bangkok Conference resolutions had not so far been ratified by the Japanese. Mohan Singh's demand that the I. N. A. should be treated as an allied army had not been met. Mohan Singh protested strongly against the use of a few Indian "a-a companies" by the Japanese for defence purposes, because, he thought, that they should be handed over to him. The Japanese did not hand over the "a-a-batteries" until Subhas Chandra Bose came. The Japanese had arranged for a ship to transfer some I. N. A. troops to Burma and members of the Council objected to the troops being sent without his knowledge. Mohan Singh told the Senior Officers that it was impossible to continue in these circumstances and that he was going to dissolve the I. N. A. Mohan Singh was arrested and taken away under Rash Behari Bose's orders and the I. N. A. was then dissolved under Mohan Singh's instruction.")

Capt. Mohan Singh had been anticipating his arrest ever since he came in conflict with Iwakuro Kikan—Japanese liason organisation—and he had preserved, in a sealed cover, his instruction that in the event of his arrest, the I. N. A. should be dissolved and the records destroyed. Having regard to the predominant feeling of everybody in the I. N. A., the arrest of Capt. Mohan Singh came as a shadow of the probable evil designs of Japan. It would always be difficult

to say as to who was in the wrong—Capt. Mohan Singh or Shri Rash Behari Bose ? The patriotism of both could not be questioned and their different reactions to Japanese interference were equally genuine. Shri Rash Behari Bose was in Japan for well over twenty-five years and had a better grasp of Japanese “co-prosperity plan” than any other Indian, whereas, Capt. Mohan Singh was a stranger to the politics of Japan and there were before him the examples of China and Manchuria to frighten him about everything that the Japanese did. Be that as it may, Capt. Mohan Singh’s clash with Iwakuro Kikan served as a great warning to the Indians, for they wanted not a mere change of masters but the freedom of India.

(In January, 1943, the Indian Independence League, acting through a Committee of Administration, took up the re-organisation of the I. N. A. Shri Rash Behari Bose, Major Dhara, Capt. Shah Nawaz and Lt. Dhillon moved from camp to camp to persuade the men to re-join the I. N. A. Again, the ideal of Independence for India had its instinctive appeal to thousands of Indians and an army was raised. But the misgivings raised by Capt. Mohan Singh’s arrest could not be dispelled from the minds of the Indians. The whole Indian community in East Asia was astir with new hopes, but everybody felt the want of strong and wise leadership. In such a moment of dark despair, the Indians in South East Asia eagerly looked up to that born-leader of men—Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, for the light and guidance of which the Indians at home had wilfully deprived themselves at Tripuri. The Indian Independence League adopted a resolution requesting Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to come to East Asia and transmitted the same to Germany through the help of Japan.)

#### NETAJI AT DRESDEN

It was sometimes in March, 1942, that the call from the East reached Shri Subhas Chandra Bose at Dresden in Germany. Dresden, at the time, was like a portion of India in Europe. The air of Dresden was then thick with cries of “Inqalab Zindabad” (Long live Revolution), “Jai Hind” (Victory to India), “Delhi Ko” (To Delhi). From Dresden to Delhi—it was a long, long way ; but the enthusiasm of those who raised those slogans defied all considerations of distance. They knew only one leader,—their Netaji, and one goal—the independence of India, their motherland.

Here is their estimate of Netaji, made by one of them, Mr. Samant, in course of an interview with a representative of the United Press of India. "He (Netaji) looked like the uncrowned king of India. We could see the halo of free India round his glittering face and shining specks. We really saw the dawn of freedom in his look, in his talk, in his work—in everything that he did and that was his. He was our Netaji no doubt, and we respected him. We pledged our life before him. We promised to give him blood and he promised us to give liberty. But, above all, he was our best friend. He used to inspect our rooms regularly. We found a great difference between the leadership and generalship of Netaji, and those of the British Generals, under whom we toiled for many years. Our British Generals knew only to boss and order. They knew to command and not to see to our difficulties. They only knew to exploit us. But our Netaji was above them all, and if true qualities of real generalship were to be seen in anybody, they could be traced in Netaji very well. To every soldier he was like a father, a brother, and more than a friend. We used to open our heart to him and he used to pacify our burning desires. To the home-sick soldiers, he used to be a source of peace and encouragement. He would not have his food unless he knew that we were all properly fed. He had no rest. He woke late at night. We found him praying to the Almighty for our welfare and the welfare of the country. We honoured him. Germans honoured him. Even high officials and Hitler himself honoured him. To the Germans he was His Excellency Subhas Chandra Bose of the Azad Hind Government. To us he was Netaji of the Azad Hind Fauj."

#### NETAJI IN THE EAST

On March 28, 1942, Reuters flashed the news from London that "Subhas Chandra Bose was killed in air crash off the coast of Japan, according to the Lyons radio quoting a Tokyo message." It was further announced that "Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose lost his life when the plane in which he was flying to Tokyo to attend a "Free India Congress" crashed off the Japanese coast, according to a Tokyo message. With him were his adjutants and a number of other Indians." It was a terrible and ominous news but the people of India, even the most illiterate man in the street laughed away the

news. But the news, wrong in its essence, contained a modicum of truth in that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose left for Tokyo at about that time. The journey from Germany to Tokyo by submarine through many enemy cordons was a perilous one and, we know to-day, that the other submarine accompanying him was actually destroyed by enemy actions ; but Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, instead of being dead, conquered death itself and reached the shores of Tokyo. His arrival was a signal for jubilation in the East. He arrived in Tokyo in April 1943, with Mr. Hassan and 'as Lt. Nag, the Prosecution witness in the First trial said, "His presence made everybody feel that they had a leader who could guide them on proper lines to the cherished goal—the liberation of India."

On June 20, 1943, he issued the following Press statement—"During the last world war, our leaders had been bluffed and deceived by the wily British politicians. That was why we took the vow, more than twenty years ago, never again to be deceived by them. For more than twenty years my generation has striven for freedom and eagerly awaited the hour that has now struck—the hour that is for the Indian people the dawn of freedom. We know very well such an opportunity will not come again for another 100 years and we are, therefore, determined to make the fullest use of it. British imperialism has meant for India moral degradation, cultural ruin, economic impoverishment and political enslavement. It is our duty to pay for our liberty with our own blood. The freedom that we shall win, through our sacrifice and exertions, we shall be able to preserve with our own strength."

(On July 4, 1943, a conference of Indian delegates was held at Singapore. Netaji of the Azad Hind Fauj of Dresden was already there and Shri Rash Behari Bose formally made over to him the office of the President of the Indian Independence League. The Indian population in the East acclaimed him with cries of "Netaji" and he greeted them with two sparkling words surging out of his heart—"Jai Hind.")

(On taking over supreme command, Netaji told the Azad Hind Fauj, in an order of the day, "In the interests of the Indian Independence movement I have taken over the direct command of our army from this day. This is a matter of joy and pride to me because, for an Indian, there can be no greater honour than to be the Commander of India's army of liberation.

But I am conscious of the magnitude of the task that I have undertaken and I feel weighed down with a sense of responsibility. I pray to God to give me the necessary strength to fulfil my duty under all circumstances, however difficult and trying they may be. I regard myself as a servant of thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, who profess different religious faiths. I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these thirty-eight crores will be safe in my hands and that every single Indian will have reason to put complete trust in me, in the coming struggle for the emancipation of our motherland, for the establishment of a Government of Free India, and for the creation of a permanent army which will guarantee Indian Independence for all times. The Azad Hind Fauj has a vital role to play. To fulfil this role we must weld ourselves into an army that will have only one goal—the freedom of India—and only one will—to do or die in the cause of India's freedom. I have complete faith in the justice and in the invincibility of our cause. Thirty-eight crores of human beings, who form one-fifth of the human race, have a right to be free and they are now prepared to pay the price of freedom. No power can deprive us of our birth-right of liberty. Comrades! Officers and men! With your unstinted support, and unflinching loyalty, the Azad Hind Fauj will become an instrument of India's liberation. Victory will certainly be ours." The order of the day ended with the slogan "Onward to Delhi" and reaffirmed the determination to fly the tri-colour on the Viceroy's House and hold the victory parade in the ancient Red Fort of India's Metropolis.)

#### SOLDIERS' DUTY

On July 15, 1943, at the military review, he gave the following message to the Army of Liberation awaiting his command :—

"Soldiers of India's Army of Liberation: Today is the proudest day of my life. Today it has pleased Providence to give me the unique honour of announcing to the whole world that India's Army of Liberation has come into being. This Army has now been drawn up in military formation on the battlefield of Singapore, which was once the bulwark of the British Empire. This is the Army that will emancipate India from British yoke.....

"Comrades! My soldiers! Let your battle-cry be: To Delhi;

To Delhi. How many of us will individually survive this war of freedom, I do not know. But I do know this that we shall ultimately win and our task will not end until our surviving heroes hold the Victory parade in the Lal Killa of Ancient Delhi..... Throughout my public career I have always felt that though India is otherwise ripe for independence in every way, she lacks one thing : an army of liberation.

"Comrades ! You are today the custodians of India's national honour and the embodiment of India's hopes and aspirations. So conduct yourselves that your countrymen may bless you and posterity may be proud of you. I assure you that I shall be with you in darkness and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in suffering and in victory. For the present, I can offer you nothing except hunger, thirst, suffering, forced marches and death. It does not matter who among us will live to see India free. It is enough that India shall be free and that we shall give our all to make her free. May God now bless our Army and grant us victory in the coming fight !"

(The re-organised Indian National Army adopted for itself the name which Netaji had given to the army at Germany, and, the formation of the "Azad Hind Fauj", with Headquarters at Singapore, was announced to the world.) Men, women, and even, children enthusiastically came forward for Netaji's leave to be enrolled in the Army, and Netaji denied to nobody the privilege of dying for the motherland. The women members of the Independence League were organised under the significant name—"Rani of Jhansi Regiment". The Regiment was placed under the command of Capt. Lakshmi Swaminathan, a lady doctor from Madras. The children were mobilised into a Balsa which formed the suicide squad of the I. N. A. They, in fact, were employed in blowing up Allied Tanks by lying prostrate under them with mines fixed to their backs. A new special service group called the "Bahadur group" was formed with duties of espionage, sabotage and infiltration into India. To co-ordinate the activities of the army, a Directorate of Military Bureau was set up in May, 1943. Capt. Shegal was appointed the Military Secretary and Capt. Shah Nawaz was made the Chief of the General Staff. The different Groups, Regiments and Battalions were properly organised under their respective Battalion Commanders. Brigades were formed by union of these Battalions



and placed under Brigade commanders who, again, were made directly responsible to Division Commanders. (Each Division of the Azad Hind Fauj consisted of 7000 to 8000 troops.) Several training camps were set up for the schooling of the recruits by Indian officers.)

#### NETAJI PROCLAIMS INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

(The 21st day of October, 1943, was a great day in the lives of the Indians in the South-East Asia. At Cathay Building, in Singapore, delegates from Thailand, Java, Sumatra, Indo-China, Hongkong and Malaya assembled at a conference convened by the Indian Independence League. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose announced the formation of the Provisional Government of Free India or Azad Hind Government.) He announced the personnel of the Azad Hind Cabinet and read the following Proclamation of Independence on behalf of the Azad Hind Cabinet :—

“After their first defeat at the hands of the British in 1757 in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of one hundred years. The history of this period teems with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice. And, in the pages of that history, the names of Sirajuddoula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haider Ali, Tippu Sultan and Velu Tampi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peshwa Baji Rao of Maharashtra, the Begums of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Atariwala of Punjab and last, but not least, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaj Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Sahib—among others—the names of all these warriors are for ever engraved in letters of gold.

Unfortunately for us, our forefathers did not at first realise that the British constituted a grave threat to the whole of India and they did not therefore put up united front against the enemy. Ultimately, when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation, they made a concerted move—and under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857, they fought their last war as free men. In spite of a series of brilliant victories in the early stage of his war, ill-luck and faulty leadership gradually brought about their final collapse and subjugation. Nevertheless, such heroes as the Rani of Jhansi, Tantia Topi, Kunwar Singh and Nana Sahib live like eternal stars in the nation's memory to inspire us to greater deeds of sacrifice and valour.

Forcibly disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror and brutality, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while—but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, there came a new awakening. From 1885 till the end of the last World War, the Indian people, in their endeavour to recover their lost liberty, tried all possible methods—namely, agitation and propaganda, boycott of British goods, terrorism and sabotage—and finally armed revolution. But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately, in 1920, when the Indian people, haunted by a sense of failure were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the new weapon of non-co-operation and civil disobedience.

For two decades thereafter, the Indian people went through a phase of intense patriotic activity. The message of freedom was carried to every Indian home. Through personal example, people were taught to suffer, to sacrifice and to die in the cause of freedom. From the centre to the remotest villages, the people were knit together into one political organisation. Thus, the Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again. They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1937 to 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministries in eight provinces, they gave proof of their readiness and capacity to administer their own affairs.

Thus, on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India's Liberation. During the course of this war, Germany with the help of her allies has dealt shattering blows to our enemy in Europe—while Nippon, with the help of her allies has inflicted a knock-out blow to our enemy in East Asia. Favoured by a most happy combination of circumstances, the Indian people today have a wonderful opportunity for achieving their national emancipation.

For the first time in recent history, Indians abroad have also been politically roused and united in one organisation. They are not only thinking and feeling in tune with their countrymen at home, but are also marching in step with them, along the path to Freedom. In East Asia, in particular, over two million Indians are now organised as one solid phalanx, inspired by the slogan of Total Mobilisation. And in front of them stand the serried ranks

of India's Army of Liberation, with the slogan "Onward to Delhi," on their lips.

Having goaded Indians to desperation by its hypocrisy and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the good will of the Indian people altogether and is now living a precarious existence. It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of that unhappy rule. To light that flame is the task of India's Army of Liberation. Assured of the enthusiastic support of the civil population at home and also of a large section of Britain's Indian Army and backed by a gallant and invincible allies abroad—but relying in the first instance on its own strength, India's Army of Liberation is confident of fulfilling its historic rôle.

Now that the dawn of Freedom is at hand, it is the duty of the Indian people to set up a Provisional Government of their own, and launch the last struggle under the banner of that Government. But with all the Indian leaders in prison, the people at home totally disarmed—it is not possible to set up a Provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the aegis of that Government. It is, therefore, the duty of the Indian Independence League in East Asia, supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad, to undertake this task—the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) and of conducting the last fight for freedom, with the help of the Army of Liberation (that is, the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army) organised by the League.

Having been constituted as the Provisional Government of Azad Hind by the Indian Independence League in East Asia, we enter upon our duties with a full sense of the responsibility that has devolved on us. We pray that Providence may bless our work and our struggle for the emancipation of our Motherland. And we hereby pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of her freedom, of her welfare, and her exaltation among the nations of the world.

It will be the task of the Provisional Government to launch and to conduct the struggle that will bring about the expulsion of the British and of their allies from the soil of India. It will then be the task of the Provisional Government to bring about the establishment of a permanent National Government of Azad

Hind constituted in accordance with the will of the Indian people and enjoying their confidence. After the British and their allies are overthrown and until a permanent National Government of Azad Hind is set up on Indian soil, the Provisional Government will administer the affairs of the country in trust for the Indian people.

The Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty, as well as equal right and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past.

✓ In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations who have welded the Indian people into one nation and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice—we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and to strike for India's Freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and all their allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in Final Victory—until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a free Nation.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind :—

Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of the State, Prime Minister and Minister for War, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army.

Capt. Miss Lakshmi (Women's organisation).

S. A. Ayer (Publicity and Propaganda).

Lt-Col. A. C. Chatterjee (Finance), Lt.-Col. Aziz Ahmed, Lt.-Col. N. S. Bhagat, Col. J. K. Bhonsle, Lt.-Col. Gulzara Singh, Lt.-Col. M. Z. Kiani, Lt.-Col. A. D. Loganadan, Lt.-Col. Ehsan Qadir, Lt.-Col. Shah Nawaz (Representatives of the Armed Forces).

A. M. Sahay, Secretary (with Ministerial rank).

Rash Behari Bose (Supreme Adviser).

Karim Gani, Debnath Das, D. M. Khan, A. Yellappa, J. Thiry. Sardar Ishar Singh (Advisers).

A. N. Sarkar (Legal Adviser)."

## NETAJI TAKES THE OATH

.. (Then, in a thrilled atmosphere, Netaji took the Oath of allegiance to India.) Here is a vivid description of the ceremony from the pen of a "Rebel Daughter of India." She writes thus in her diary. "Loud and prolonged cheers echoed and re-echoed in the vast hall as Netaji took the Oath of allegiance to India. He was so moved that at one stage minutes passed, but his voice could not triumph over the emotion, which struggled in his throat. The emotion, suddenly welled up, showed how deeply each word of the oath and the sanctity of the occasion had affected him. In a low voice, now soft, but always firm, he read out : 'In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that to liberate India and the 38 Crores of my countrymen, I, Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this sacred war of freedom till the last breath of my life'. And here he paused. It seemed that he would break down. Each one of us had been mentally repeating each word of the oath. We were all leaning forward, physically trying to reach the granite figure of Netaji. The whole audience was merged in him. Pindrop silence. (With lips tightly closed and eyes glued, body tense, we waited for him to overcome the struggle over emotion. Presently he began in solemn voice, like man-organ in church :)

("I shall always remain a servant of India and look after the welfare of 38 crores of Indian brothers and sisters. This shall be for me my highest duty.")

("Even after winning freedom, I will always be prepared to shed the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India's freedom".)

(The tension was relieved. We could breath freely again. Then each member of the Provisional Government came up, in front of the vast conference and individually took the oath—"In the name of God, I take this holy oath that to liberate India and 38 crores of my countrymen I will be absolutely faithful to our leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, and shall always be prepared to sacrifice my life and all I have for the cause'.)

## NATURE OF AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT

(The establishment of a Free India Government with Headquarters at Singapore was a new phenomenon in a war-stricken world playing with the liberty of the nations. It is a government which aimed neither at territorial expansion nor at the supremacy

of one race over another, but at the assertion and acquisition of a nation's moral right to live as a free people. It was a government, not of a people whose faith in violence was ingrained in their philosophy, habits and mode of life, but of one, who since the catastrophic fall of the Sepoy Mutiny, had abjured the path of violence as something repugnant to the genius, culture and traditions of the race and had boldly carried on a non-violent movement of spiritual protest against their political subjection.) In a world full of chaos and anarchy, the birth of the Azad Hind Government was a triumph of the forces of spiritualism over militarism—and its proclamation of Independence was virtually an open defiance of the fear of brute force that seeks to throttle a nation's will to be free. (The moral and political values of the proclamation made by Azad Hind Government were as high as the American Declaration of Independence, though militarists might judge their respective values, by the scale of their military success or failure. The declaration was an assertion of victory over a slavish fear of the instruments of co-ercion at the disposal of a mighty foreign ruler.)

The Azad Hind Government functioned like all other civilised governments. It had its own laws, its own executive and its own judiciary. Laws were proclaimed by the Supreme Head of the State and obeyed by the subjects. Disputes were referred to competent officers whose decisions were accepted as binding on the disputants. The Indian Independence League, as re-oriented by Netaji, acted as the Executive branch of the Azad Hind Government. The amity and good-will which characterised life, under the Azad Hind Government, of men belonging to different religions and castes, bear clear testimony to the capacity and efficiency of the Executive department of the Azad Hind Government. In the maintenance of the "law and order", the Executive had the fullest co-operation of the people. From the point of view of willing allegiance to the government and ready obedience to its orders, the Azad Hind Government was a true democracy—a government of the people, by the people and for the people, though from the point of view of structural paraphernalia it was not a democracy at all. It was a democracy in spirit though not in form. Here, as nowhere else, one is reminded of the words of Pope—

“For forms of Government let fools contest,  
That which is best administered is best.”

The Azad Hind Fauj, though anterior in point of time, was absorbed in the body polity of Azad Hind Government as one of its essential parts. This subordination of the Army to the Azad Hind Government vested the Army with the status, dignity and honour of an organised and disciplined army of a civilised government. The character of insurgents, if ever such a character had attached to the Azad Hind Fauj, could no longer be imputed to it. Indeed, it was an Army of a free State.

### THE STATE IN AZAD HIND

Definitions of a state are many and various, almost every writer having his own and scarcely any two being alike. What is more important in any consideration of the concept of the state is the plain fact that the notion of the state of one generation has never been treated as immutable by its successors. In ancient Hindu political thought, the concept of the state could be clearly traced from their theory of authority and punishment. The state, according to this theory, was an organisation having the ability to coerce obedience and impose penalties upon the body of men owing allegiance to it. The sovereign power, in such a state, was vested in the “unity of opinion possessed by the many”. Leaving aside the other theocratic conceptions of the state held by the Orientals, we come to the Greek conception of a well developed state, as the highest of all human organisations endowed with a living personality, absorbing in its life all individual personalities purposely yielding to a higher self, a giving up of his will to a higher will in the formation of which he participated. Aristotle, the political seer of ancient days, who sowed the germs of modern political science, defined the state as the collective body of citizens, and defined a citizen, as one who has the right to take part in the government. The ancient Roman conception of the state differed from the Hellenic in that it endowed the individual with a personality apart from the personality of the state and viewed the state as a legal person, exercising its authority within definite limits. The essentially unpolitical medieval political thought produced nothing but feudalism and a conflict between the church and the state, and, we leave out of account this period when the

Holy Fathers threatened the very existence of the state. The modern definitions of the state, which are more germane to our present purpose of adjudging the claims of the Azad Hind Government, to be recognised as the properly constituted machinery of a free state, are stated below :—

Holland, the English Jurist, defined the state as “a numerous assemblage of human beings, generally occupying a certain territory, among whom the will of the majority, or of an ascertainable class of persons, is by the strength of such a majority or class, made to prevail against any of their number who oppose it”.

Sidgwick, the well-known English writer on Political science, defines the state as a “political society or community, i.e., a body of human beings deriving its corporate unity from the fact that its members acknowledge permanent obedience to the same government, which represents the society in any transaction that it may carry on as a body with other political societies.”

Professor Burgess of Columbia University, New York, says that the state is a “particular portion of mankind viewed as an organised unity.”

Dr. Willoughby, another American authority, says that the state exists “wherever there can be discovered in any community of men a supreme authority exercising a control over the social actions of individuals and groups of individuals, and itself subject to no such regulation.”

We have purposely confined our attention to Anglo-American authorities on political science. Put to the test of these definitions, the Azad Hind Government amply satisfies the conditions laid down for being recognised as a government of a free state. A confusion is too often made between the state and the government. The Government is not the state ; it is a part of the state. As Prof. Garner puts it, “Government is no more the state than the brain of the animal is itself the animal.” The State is largely an abstraction, a juristic idea, expressing the relationship of command and obedience among men organised as a political society. The only proof of its existence lies in the mind of men owning it as its own political organisation and rendering habitual obedience to its dictates as expressed through laws. The government is the outward, concrete manifestation of the state, it is the focus of the common purposes of the people—the organ of unity, the machinery through which the



will of the state is expressed. The State is the final legal depositary of the social will and the government is the mere servant of the people charged with the duty of enforcing that Social will. It may be, as Professor Laski points out, that for all practical purposes the government is the state, but in any discussion of the fundamentals of any Social Organisation the difference between the two must be kept in sight. A Government presupposes the existence of a state and where there is no state, there is no Government.

No hard and fast rule can be laid down as to how the sense of corporate unity, based on a sense of common allegiance, grows among a people. When it is perceived, it is already there striving for an outlet to express itself in an organised way through a government. From the time of the Cyclopean society to the modern age, speculating on the chances of a Supra-national or World state, we have various accounts of the causes leading to the formation of particular states. But what is true of all the instances of history is the undeniable fact that the birth of every state can be traced to the creative act of a leader, who either created and developed the common will of the whole population for a common superior or undertook to give a concrete shape to such a pre-existing common will, and established the state. The Azad Hind State affords one more instance of a leader establishing a state in pursuance of a pre-existing common will of two millions of Indians in South East Asia, imbued by a sense of common allegiance to their Motherland.

The definitions quoted above clearly show that, from the days of the ancient Hindus to the present day, one invariable characteristic of a state is the habitual obedience of the entire population to a common superior. To the millions of Indians in South-East Asia that common superior was the Azad Hind Government of which Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was the Supreme Head. Text books on political science consider the following elements as indispensable for the purposes of a state, viz., (i) Population (ii) Territory (iii) Organisation or Government (iv) Sovereignty. It is our considered opinion that the Azad Hind State possessed all these four elements.

### 1. ITS POPULATION

(The nucleus of the Population under the Azad Hind State was formed when Col. Hunt acting as a representative of the British

Government handed over 50,000 Indian troops to Major Fujiwara, with instructions to obey the Japanese in the same way in which they obeyed the British Government, and, Major Fujiwara, in his turn, acting as the representative of the Japanese Government, handed them over to Capt. Mohan Singh. The fate of these 50,000 Indian troops roused the national consciousness of millions of Indians in East Asia. They were abjured by the British Government, as represented by Col. Hunt, and left over as unwanted burden by the Japanese Government, acting through Major Fujiwara.) They were then in the position of men without a state. As life in society is impossible without a state, they formed one of their own. (For nearly a year, they had to live their state-less life, and after passing through many vicissitudes of fortune, they found in Netaji a leader who could deliver the goods and instinctively owed allegiance to him.) (This personal allegiance to Netaji ultimately crystallised into allegiance to the Azad Hind State of which Netaji became the Supreme Head with the avowed object of liberating all Indians.)

## 2. ITS TERRITORY

The claim of Azad Hind Government to Statehood has been seriously challenged on the supposed ground that it had no territory. It has been said, with a good deal of satire, that "one may ask oneself the question as to what it was that the Provisional Government of Free India governed? It did not own nor was it in occupation of any inch of territory". Apart from the factual incorrectness of the above statement, which we shall point out later on, we feel that such a criticism is entirely based on a misconception of the part "territory" plays in the make up of a state. Territory is no doubt mentioned in the text books as one of the physical elements of a state; but it is certainly not a territory that a state governs, unless it is to be the state of Alexander Selkirk, owning a vast and expansive and solitary territory, where no voice other than his own could be heard. The State governs a people through its government as the Provisional Government of Free India governed the two millions of Indians of whom 232,562 had acknowledged their allegiance in writing. If territory were the *sine qua non* of a state, then any adventurer could plant himself into any portion of

*res nullius*—no man's land and proclaim a state. What renders habitual obedience to the sovereign is not the dry, barren and dead tract of land but a living people. Territory is indispensable to the state in the sense that the people constituting the state must have a fixed place of abode—their home or as the American authors, quoting the German word say, “their *bodens*.” In other words, the population of a state cannot be made up of nomads or wandering tribes. Territory is to the State what Palestine is to the Jews. Can anybody think of denying the Jews the right to transfer their homes elsewhere and to form there a state again. The two millions of Indians, over whom the Azad Hind Government governed, could not, by any stretch of imagination, be called nomads or wandering tribes. With due respect to those who think differently, one may ask oneself the question as to what these territory-mongers would gibe at when the idea of a supra-national state will be a reality and the highest state in the world will have no territory of its own? Narrow legalism has always been the pest of politics! Why cling so tenaciously to a mere relic of feudalism—territorial sovereignty? We may, however, mention in passing that the Azad Hind Government had their own territory in Andaman, Nicobar and in Ziwadi.

### 3. ITS ORGANISATION

The third essential mark of the Azad Hind State was its organisation called the Azad Hind Government or the Provisional Government of Free India. Here again, we come across the criticism that it was no government at all, as it was of a Provisional nature. Who has ever heard of a Government being anything other than “Provisional”? Governments may undergo changes as quickly as the physical features of a mortal man; it is the state that is permanent in the sense that political life is always a life within a state. “The state never dies” is as true as the aphorism “The King never dies.” Be that as it may, how can one refuse to an administrative organisation the status and the dignity of a government on the simple ground that it is provisional? Have not those who carp at this Provisional Government ever heard of “care-taker governments”, or “interim governments”?

We have already indicated how, through different departments, the Azad Hind Government discharged the legislative, executive

and judicial functions of a government. In addition to these essential functions, the Azad Hind Government undertook certain ministrant functions like Education, Public Health, Road-making etc. It maintained a regular institute for training in Civil Service and recruited from these trainees officers for the Azad Hind Dal which was entrusted with the responsible duty of administering whatever territories were occupied by the Azad Hind Fauj. Andaman and Nicobar, for instance, were formerly ceded by the Japanese to the Azad Hind Government and Col. Loganadan, one of the cabinet ministers of Azad Hind Government, was deputed by Netaji to administer these territories as a Commissioner. Col. Loganadan was assisted by Major Alvi, who took charge of the Education Department, by Lt. Subha Singh, who was placed in charge of Revenue and Finance and by Lt. Iqbal, having the charge of the Police Department. Similarly, Ziawadi, a territory of nearly 50 Square miles in area having a population of 15,000 men, was administered by the Azad Hind Dal. It had a Home for the disabled, a Hospital, and Sugar, Yarn, Blanket and Gunnymaking factories. Teshildars were appointed for groups of villages to collect Revenue and to settle small disputes. Serious disputes were sent to Azad Hind Dal. The department of Police was in charge of Shri Shyam Charan Mitra, Shri B. Ghosh had charge of P. W. D. and agriculture. Col. Chatterjee, Governor-designate of liberated territories had his Head Quarters at Ziawadi. The Advocate-General of India likened Ziawadi to a "Kingdom". How we wish that he had called it "Azaddom", meaning thereby, The Land of Freedom !

The Azad Hind Government published an official Gazette in which army appointments were notified and brought out news bulletines called "Azad Hind" and "Jai Hind." The Congress colours were made the insignia of the Government and the Congress flag was honoured as the flag of the Provisional Government of Free India.

Had the Azad Hind Government any revenue of its own ? It has been contended that "not a pie of tax or revenue" was collected by this Government. As opposed to this contention, we have the evidence of Shri Dinanath, a Director of Azad Hind Bank, which was a shareholders' Bank with Registered office at 97, Park Street, Rangoon, that on July, 1944, the accounts of the Azad Hind Government with the Bank showed a government credit of

\$15,353,14—one dollar, at the time, being reckoned as more valuable than a Rupee. As the fiscal agent of the government, the Azad Hind Bank was competent to testify that the total collections of the government rose to Rs. 15 crores in Burma and exceeded Rs. 5 crores in Malaya. One feels inclined to ask how the Azad Hind Government came to possess Rs. 20 crores if it had not collected a single pie as "Revenue". Revenue denotes the income of a state from which public expenses are met, and if the expression means anything else in law, we must join our voice with Dickens and say "Law is an ass". Is there anything in the Principles of Public Finance to warrant the conclusion that Revenue must always be derived from direct taxations, and by impositions of tarriff or commodity duties? There is nothing so tainted about "voluntary contributions", paid by men, out of regards to the higher principles of life, as to be unacceptable to the public coffer as government revenue. The Government of Great Britain had, at one time, started a "Conscience-Money Fund" to which men, who had evaded the payment of Income tax, used to contribute, whenever they were pricked by conscience, and the total collections therefrom were taken in as Government Revenue. A state that can enthuse its people to sacrifice their utmost for the general welfare may not secure revenue by legal compulsion. Historians of the future will find in the Azad Hind Government one solitary instance of such a noble institution in the ignoble field of politics. The Azad Hind Government had its Revenue every pie of which was made up of voluntary contributions. It was not a bankrupt government, and when the British Military authorities seized the Azad Hind Bank, it had the custody of considerable lakhs of rupees belonging to the Azad Hind Government.

The Indian National Army was absorbed in its entirety by the Azad Hind Government and was renamed the Azad Hind Fauj and the accounts and expenditure of the army were in the hands of the Finance Department of the Azad Hind Government.

#### 4. SOVEREIGNTY—(a) INTERNAL

There remains for us to consider whether the Azad Hind State possessed the supreme element of "statehood," namely, Sovereignty. Sovereignty implies, in the first place, that the state should be supreme in internal matters, and secondly, that it should be independent of external control. Was the Azad Hind

State a sovereign state? We need not go beyond the recorded evidence of the witnesses before the Court Martial to assert that it was a state, both in the eye of political science and international law. Over the two millions of Indians in East Asia, the Azad Hind Government had undisputed mastery. To the Indians in East Asia, its will was law. No better proof of its organisational efficiency and internal supremacy could be had than the fact that for a fortnight after the surrender of Rangoon, British Military officers in Rangoon had asked the Azad Hind Government to continue their administration in the interests of "law and order". We reproduce below the relevant portion of Capt. R.M. Arshad's evidence before the Court Martial :—

"The Japanese started evacuating Rangoon on April 23, 1945, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose left on April. 24. Before leaving, he appointed Col. Loganadan as G.O.C. of the Burma Command, to be in charge of I. N. A. troops which were being left behind in Burma and appointed witness as Chief of Staff to Col. Loganadan. Bose told them that he was leaving behind this I. N. A. contingent for the sole purpose of looking after Indian civilians in Rangoon."

Witness went on : "Netaji gave us orders that the main duty of this force being left behind was that till such time as the Allied troops could arrive in Rangoon it should take over control. Then he ordered us to surrender as prisoners of war to Allied representatives. As soon as we received his orders, I, as Chief of Staff, assumed control of looking after and issuing orders regarding our future role. At that juncture the Japanese had withdrawn from Rangoon. There were no Burmese troops at all. There was a Burma Defence Army, but its troops were either in hiding or beyond Rangoon. The only armed forces left were about 5,000 to 6,000 troops of the I. N. A. in Rangoon."

"These I. N. A. troops were in different camps. He took over control of these camps and drafted a plan for patrolling, policing and doing guard duties by these contingents in localities where Indians mainly resided. After approval by G. O. C. Loganadan, the plan was put into action. By April 21, Rangoon town had been completely evacuated by the Japanese and there was no police or any administration working in Rangoon. There was an acting Prime Minister of the Burmese Government in

Rangoon but the Burmese Government had no police force. Witness called on him and explained to him what the I. N. A. was doing and offered whatever help the I. N. A. could render. He agreed with the I. N. A. officers and the following day sent his chief police officer."

"Witness further discussed the matter with the police officer and, with whatever Burmese police force available, they carried on night patrolling of Rangoon and maintained sentries at focal points.

"When the Japanese left, witness said, they threw the rice godowns as well as various provision-godowns open to the public and there was a danger that there would be civil disturbances. Whenever there was a godown located open, witness put I. N. A. sentries to guard it and informed the Burmese authorities about it. Witness also attended a meeting of the Burmese Cabinet and explained to them the work which was being done by the I. N. A.

"About April 25 or 26, witness learnt that the Central jail, where British prisoners of war were housed, had been left open by the Japanese, when they left.

Witness went to the jail and made contact with the Senior-most British P. O. W. there, who happened to be a Wing Commander, R. A. A. F. "I told him", witness said, "of what the I. N. A. was doing and what the intentions of the I. N. A. were. I told him that as he was the seniormost officer present there of the Allied forces, I placed myself under his command and that I was willing to surrender the I. N. A. to him. But he told me to continue the work which I was doing. He said that he had about a thousand British and Indian P. O. W. in the jail and they would all stay there inside the jail but I was to report to him every morning for orders."

"At about the same time, witness said, an officer of the Burma Defence Army came to see him. The B. D. A. was allied with British forces and was hostile to the Japanese. The B. D. A. officer told witness that it was his intention to take charge of Rangoon town. He said that the B. D. A. officers were in contact with the Allied forces and they were working on a general plan. Witness took the B. D. A. officer to Wing Commander Hudson. The Wing Commander did not believe the B. D. A. officer and asked him for a written authority from the British forces under whom they

were acting. The B. D. A. officer was unable to produce such an authority and witness was ordered to continue the work which the I. N. A. was doing."

Wing Commander Hudson told the Burmese officer that unless and until the B. D. A. produced a written authority or an order from the Allied Commander he would not accept the B. D. A. ; and in the meantime, if the B. D. A. in any way harmed the troops of the I. N. A. the Wing Commander would hold that B. D. A. officer personally responsible. The I. N. A. continued its work without knowing what the intentions of the Allied forces were. The Japanese had evacuated the town for nearly six days and the I. N. A. expected the Allied forces to come at any moment, but in spite of Rangoon being more or less an open town, the Allied planes still came over bombing and strafing. Witness told Wing Commander of the sufferings of the civilians and gave him a transmitter so that he could send across a message. But the Wing Commander did not know the wave lengths on which to send the message.

This account of Rangoon, after its surrender, affords clear proof of the fact that the Azad Hind Government was the only organisation that could make itself obeyed by the people ; and it is the fact of this obedience that makes a State internally supreme.

#### SOVEREIGNTY—(b) EXTERNAL

The external sovereignty of the state is reflected through the state's foreign relations. A state whose foreign relations are determined by the will of another state is a mere puppet and not a state at all. But, with the growth of International Laws and organisations, the unlimited power of the state to do whatever it likes has been subjected to various limitations imposed by treaties, conventions, agreements and international rules of conduct. In the words of Laski, "the way in which a state should live its life in relation to other states is clearly not a matter in which that state is entitled to be the sole judge." The moot question, therefore, is not whether a state can do whatever it likes, but whether, for the purposes of international dealings, it is a free agent of its own will. Once this freedom from external control is established, the state is admitted into the family of free nations and acquires the status of a state in the eye of International law.



One extra-ordinary fact about the Azad Hind State must not be forgotten in any discussion of its political character, the broad fact that the Azad Hind State was born in the battle-front. From its very inception, therefore, it had to make its choice of allies. As the family of nations was then torn asunder into two hostile camps, its inclusion into the one led to its automatic exclusion from the other. The question can, therefore, be hardly pressed as to whether all the states had recognised it as a state or not. ? It will be enough for our purpose to show that the Azad Hind State, as an ally of the Axis States, had the same independence as the other members of the "Axis Group" had in their dealings with each other.

Coming now to facts which to-day form a part of the history of the world's hectic days of war, we find that the first to give recognition to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was Japan. On the 23rd October, 1943, two days after the Proclamation of Independence by the Provisional Government, the Japanese Government issued a statement wherein they said that "the Provisional Government of Azad Hind had been established under the leadership of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and the Imperial Japanese Government were confident that this marked an epoch-making step towards the long-cherished aspirations of the people of India for Independence." The statement further continued : "The Japanese Government recognise the Government as the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and hereby declare that every possible assistance on its part will be afforded to the latter for the achievement of India's independence". This recognition by Japan was followed by similar recognition by Germany, Italy, Thailand, Philipines, Croatia, Manchuria and the Government of Burma. It is to be borne in mind that the recognition was unconditional in that Japan recognised the Provisional Government before she declared war on the Allied Powers. The Azad Hind Government could not be induced to wage war against the Allied Powers merely because Japan was at war with the Allied Powers. It took up arms only after it had made a formal declaration of war, as required by the provisions of International Law, and its hostile acts were directed only against the Anglo-Americans, on whom the Azad Hind Government actually declared war. China was an inveterate enemy

of Japan but Netaji Subhas Chandra had always assured Generalissimo Chiang Ki Shek that nothing would be done against China by the Azad Hind Government as long as the Chinese forces would keep out of the way of the Azad Hind Fauj.

The Allied News agencies had always referred to the Azad Hind Government as a puppet government of Japan. We have already discussed how Captain Mohan Singh had, from the very inception of the Indian National Army, resisted all attempts on the part of the Nippon Government to spoon-feed this new fangled army with its money and other resources and to direct its movements. He did not accept any help from Japan in lieu of which he could not undertake the liability to pay in coins, and, he did not allow a single Indian to be employed by Japanese authorities in any work without his consent. Japanese pressure could not break him down, he, on the contrary, disbanded the Indian National Army. The towering personality of Netaji succeeded where Captain Mohan Singh had nobly failed. Azad Hind Government was an ally of Japan on a footing of perfect equality. Instead of the Azad Hind Government playing to the tune of Japan, it was the latter which grew anxious to prove its bonafide to Netaji and his government. On Nov. 6, 1943, in the Assembly of Greater East Asiatic Nations, General Tojo, in offering his hand of co-operation to the Azad Hind Government in its fight for India's freedom said "Now that the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind has been solidified still further and the Indian patriots under the same government are firmly determined to accomplish their steadfast aim, I take the occasion to declare that the Imperial Government of Japan is ready shortly to place the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of Indian territory, now under the occupation of Imperial Japanese forces, under the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind as the initial evidence of her intention to help in India's struggle for freedom." As said before, Andaman and Nicobar were actually handed over to Col. Loganadan on February 17, 1944, and were re-named Saheed and Swaraj respectively by the Azad Hind Govt. Does this offer of "initial evidence" of Japan's intention fit in with the theory of Azad Hind Government being a mere puppet Government of Japan ?

In the day to day dealings with the Imperial Government of

Japan, the Azad Hind Government maintained its dignity as a free state, and its freedom from external control and the supremacy of its own will. Mr. S. A. Ayer, the Publicity and Propaganda Minister of the Azad Hind Government, cited before the Court Martial three instances of the dealings of Provisional Government with the Government of Japan to show that the relations between the two were on terms of equality. "In March 1944, there was a conference between Subhas Chandra Bose and the Japanese. Witness (Shri Ayer) attended the conference. The Japanese suggested a Japanese chairman of the War Co-operation Council which was to be set up in connection with operations to be carried out on Indian soil. The Japanese said that it would be much better to have a Japanese Chairman for practical convenience. Subhas Bose resisted the suggestion on grounds of principle and said that he could not accept anything which he knew very well would not be acceptable to the people in India. Subhas Bose made the counter-suggestion that if they could not have an Indian chairman, both sides should meet on a footing of absolute equality without a chairman. To the best of witness' re-collection, no Japanese chairman was appointed. At another Conference which was attended by witness, the Japanese said that they would be glad to receive advance intimation of the appointments of the Ministers of Supply and Man-power of the Provisional Government before they were actually made. Subhas Bose maintained that the appointment of these ministers was purely an internal affair of his. He would of course not mind informing them as a matter of courtesy after the appointments had been made. Subhas Bose maintained that attitude to the end. In another instance, which came to witness's official knowledge, Subhas Bose made it clear in a scheme drawn up for the administration of liberated areas, that no Japanese firm could be allowed to move into the areas. No other Bank except the Azad Hind Bank would be allowed to function in the liberated area." We are further told that when, in one of the conferences, Tojo referred to Netaji as the leader who, in no time, would be the First President of a Free India, Netaji, instead of feeling flattered as Tojo had expected, rebuked Tojo and told him that it was the business of Indians in India to elect their own leader and Tojo had no right to make such a suggestion.

The same spirit of independence permeated the Azad Hind Fauj

The I. N. A. officers were conscious of their position and dignity as officers of equal rank with the Japanese officers. To the suggestion that I. N. A. officers saluted the Japanese officers, General Katakura, Chief of General Staff, Supreme Head Quarters, Burma, said, "Japanese and I. N. A. personnel saluted each other". The rank and file of the Azad Hind Fauj were instructed by the I.N.A. Officers to keep their head and shoulder above the Japanese. To the men who formed the Subhas Brigade, No. I. Guerilla Regiment, Capt Shah Nawaz, the Brigade Commander frankly stated, "When India is made free and the Japanese, who are now helping us, try to subdue us, we shall fight them. Even now, if a Japanese give you one slap, you give him three, because our government is a parallel one to Japanese government and we are in no way subservient to the Japanese. When we reach India, and if we notice any Japanese maltreating our women, he should be first warned by word of mouth not to do so, and if he continue to do so, then we are at liberty to use force and we must shoot him".

In November 1944, there was a talk of exchange of Diplomatic Representatives between the Imperial Government of Japan and the Azad Hind Government. The Japanese Board of Information issued the following statement :—"Conversations are now going on between Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, Head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the representatives of the Imperial Japanese Government concerning measures for increased co-operation between the two governments in regard to the successful consummation of the Greater East Asia war and the Independence of India". As a result of these conversations, Mr. T. Hachiya, an experienced Japanese diplomat with a record of service in Poland, Bulgaria and in the Cultural Department of the Japanese Foreign Office in Tokyo, was appointed the Japanese Minister to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose refused to see him on the ground that he did not have any credentials with him. Mr. Hachiya's government had ultimately to yield to the just demands of Netaji and credentials had to be sent to enable Mr. Hachiya to act as the diplomatic agent of the Imperial Government of Japan.

The incidents narrated above so eloquently bear testimony to the independence of the Azad Hind Government that we can,

without the least hesitation, grant to it the honour, title and dignity of a State.

### NETAJI DECLARES WAR,

Once the Azad Hind Government was well-organised, Netaji had only one thought, namely, the liberation of India. About the price of the freedom he desired, he had no delusion. An ascetic all through his life, he had spurned at all the worldly success and comfort which could be his for the mere asking and had deliberately launched upon a career of suffering and sacrifice which ultimately demanded of him the sacrifice of all that he could call his own—his old widowed mother, his other dear and near ones, even his pleasure of living in his motherland. He had left India in search of India's road to freedom and had, at last, succeeded in raising an army of Fakirs ready to die for the Motherland. He had dreamt of a disciplined army of Indians ever since his entry into politics and the gusto and efficiency with which he organised the Congress Volunteer Corps during the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress and himself became its General Officer Commanding amazed his admiring countrymen. That, however, was an army of unarmed volunteers whom he brought under strict military discipline. Since then, he had himself obtained all kinds of military training under the best military talents of Germany including Field Marshall Rommel. If ever the hidden lores of his life as an exile come to light, it would be found how assiduously he had equipped himself for the role of the Supreme Commander of an Army before he assumed charge of the Azad Hind Fauj. The women in the Indian National Army were already organised into the Rani of Jhansi Regiment placed under the command of Capt. Lakshmi Swaminathan, a lady doctor from Madras, and Netaji's first public function as the Head of the Azad Hind Government, was in connection with the opening of a training camp for the recruits of the "Rani of Jhansi" regiment.

(On the 25th October, 1943, Netaji made the formal declaration of war on behalf of the Azad Hind Cabinet against England and America. This formal notification of war was sent out to the world through the Azad Hind Broadcasting Station. The Azad Hind Fauj committed no act of hostility against Britain and America till the war was declared. Then, on the 30th October, a war council was

formed to conduct the war on behalf of the Azad Hind Government in alliance with its allies—the Axis Powers. Arrangements had to be made for the removal of the Azad Hind Head Quarters to Rangoon and as a first step towards that move, the Bahadur Group was deputed to Burma to make a survey of the country and to send its reports to the Head Quarters.) Through the efforts of the Indian Independence League, acting through its chain of branches in all the countries of South-East Asia, recruits began to pour in thousands necessitating the organisation of more training camps, the formation of new Brigades and the re-organisation and incorporation of the existing Brigades into different Divisions. (By the end of October, 1943, Subhas Guerilla Brigade was formed with Capt. Shah Nawaz as its Brigade Commander. It is said that the strength of the Army, at about this time rose, to 65 thousand)

#### MARCH TO DELHI

On January 7, 1944, the Head Quarters of the Azad Hind Government and the Fauj were removed to Rangoon to enable Netaji and his Government to watch the military operations of the Fauj from a close range. The Subhas Brigade was the first to be called to the front. Capt. Shah Nawaz, its Brigade commander was spoiling for a fight with the British Army. Capt. Shah Nawaz was an officer in the 14th Punjab Regiment of the British Indian Army, with a tradition of loyalty in the family, 80 members of which had shed their blood in the service of the British Crown. He was now a Major General in the Azad Hind Fauj, determined to sacrifice the last drop of his blood for the country's freedom. As he himself said, "just as Hazarat Imam decided to wage war of right and justice, similarly he had decided to sacrifice his life for the independence of India. It was the right of every Indian to aspire for freedom and to fight for it." In course of the statement he made before the Court Martial, Shah Nawaz said, "when I decided to join the I. N. A., I decided to sacrifice my everything—my life, my home, my family and its traditions of loyalty to the king. I made up my mind to fight even against my brother if he stood in my way and in the fighting that followed in 1944 we actually fought against each other. He was wounded. My cousin and I were opposing each other in the Chin Hills almost daily for two months. The question before us was loyalty to the king or the country, I decided to

be loyal to my country and I gave my word to my Netaji that I will sacrifice my all for her sake..... I knew we had a real leader, and when he, in the name of millions of, poverty-stricken, unarmed and helpless Indians, appealed to us to come forward and sacrifice our lives for their liberation, no honourable Indian could have refused that much to him. I found a leader and decided to follow him, and for me it was the greatest decision of my life—of fighting against my kith and kin, who were in the British Indian Army in very large numbers, and whom, I was certain, I could never induce to see eye to eye with me."

Netaji appreciated the ardour of Shah Nawaz's patriotism and deputed him to settle the plans of attack in collaboration with the Nippon Government. On January, 27, 1944, the negotiations were completed and the plans had the approval of Azad Hind Government. By 7th February, 1944, the Subhas Brigade, under the command of Capt. Shah Nawaz, made its way to Haka-Falam front. They were then only 30 miles away from the Indian border. The "do or die"-thrust of the Subhas Brigade proved too much for the British forces holding the Arakan front and gradually the defenders moved back till Shah Nawaz had complete mastery over the entire Arakan region. The tricolour flag of the Provisional Government of Free India waved in the Arakan air and the administration of the territory was at once vested in the Azad Hind Dal. The brave deeds of the Subhas Brigade drew the unstinted admiration of Netaji and Shah Nawaz was the proud recipient of the message of warm appreciation from Netaji Subhas Chandra.

#### FREE FLAG ON THE INDIAN SOIL

The initial success spurred the Azad Hind Fauj to more vigorous activities and within a short while the Guerilla Regiment I, II & III were spread over Burma, at Manipur Sectors, and the Guerilla Regiment No. IV was posted at Mandalay. In March, 1944 the Azad Hind Headquarter was wild with joy to learn that through the Palel Sector Shah Nawaz and his Brigade had entered into India. A portion of India, however small, was thus freed from the chains rivetted round her and now holding her in subjection for the last 190 years. Col. Chatterjee was appointed the first Governor of the Free Indian territory and the Free Flag of a Free India Govt. fluttered in the air with the pride and

dignity which attach to a National Flag. Thus, the Azad Hind Fauj was on the soil of India and from there it carried on the war of India's liberation. Two main approaches were now open to the Azad Hind Fauj for an all out march into India—the one leading to Chittagong and Bengal and the other, the northern route running to Manipur and Assam through mountainous regions and jungle lands. The bases at Dimapur, Kohima and Imphal, with the well built roads linking these towns, were the chief attractions of the latter route. Given the choice of either of these two routes, Shah Nawaz decided to march on Imphal. His was a very bold and ambitious project, and, more so, because of the impending monsoon. No sooner was a decision made than the order was passed on one column of the Azad Hind Fauj to march on Imphal and the surrounding plains and another towards Dimapur to seize the whole length towards Manipur. On the 18th of March 1944, in his own inimitable language, Netaji issued the following Order of the Day.

"There, there in the distance—beyond that river, beyond those jungles, beyond those hills, lies the promised land, the soil from which we sprang—the land to which we shall now return.

Hark ! India is calling, India's metropolis Delhi is calling, three hundred and eighty-eight millions of our countrymen are calling, Blood is calling to Blood.

Get up, we have no time to lose. Take up your arms. There, in front of you is the road that our pioneers have built. We shall march along that road. We shall carve our way through the enemy's ranks or if God wills, we shall die a martyr's death.

And in our last sleep we shall kiss the road that will bring our Army to Delhi. The road to Delhi is the road to freedom. "Chalo Delhi !"

#### EPIC BATTLE OF KOHIMA

On March 27, 1944, the Azad Hind Fauj, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Nippon Army, penetrated towards Imphal and attacked Kharson and Jessami—villages lying to the east of Kohima. Their onslaughts were so severe that the British Forces, baffled in their attempts to repel the attack, yielded to the superior military skill of Azad Hind Fauj and retreated into Kohima and even towards Dimapur. Pursuing the opponents, the Azad



Hind Fauj crossed the outskirts of Kohima, a little town in the Naga Hills, only 46 miles south-east of Dimapur. Then began the epic battle of Kohima which witnessed the unparalleled heroism and unabated zeal of many unknown heroes of the Azad Hind Fauj. On the 5th April, 1944 the G.P.T. Ridge, one of the main defences of Kohima, which was also the source of Kohima's water supply, was completely occupied by the Azad Hind Fauj. Within two days thereafter, they succeeded in completely closing their knot around the town by getting astride the Manipur Road. They now made the Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow at Kohima the target of their attack and stormed it away in the face of continuous shell fire. The tempo of the attack was greatly quickened by the news of the other side being reinforced by fresh supply of men and attacks were launched in great strength on the Field Supply Depot on Treasury Hill. Men of the Azad Hind Fauj infiltrated into the enemy's line and took cover in ovens belonging to the field bakery from where grenades were hurled on the defenders who could do nothing but fall back. It now became apparent that the British forces were fighting to gain time to enable the Royal West Kent Regiment and 7th Rajput Regiment to link up with the defenders of Kohima. The Supply Depot Area was ultimately captured on April 17, after furious fighting and the next morning, the Azad Hind Fauj came on in massed assault and completely swept the entire allied defences. In the mean time, the other columns had succeeded in occupying positions which put Imphal in a state of sieze. The other remarkable achievement of the period was the occupation of Tiddim in Chin Hills from where the British forces withdrew completely.

The monsoon however turned the tide of events and the Azad Hind Fauj which was so long kept supplied by the Subhas Brigade No I. was now completely cut off from its sources of supply. The advanced units at Kohima were practically stranded and were compelled to recede back only to reattack Kohima on the 8th May 1944. The War Council of the Azad Hind Government however, decided to suspend the operation for the time being. Speaking at a Press Conference at Lahore on the 10th January, 1946, Capt. Sehgal, Military Secretary to the Azad Hind Government described the circumstances in which the Azad Hind Units had to withdraw from Imphal and Kohima front, "The road behind which

they were fighting," said Capt. Sehgal, "was a sea of mud. Transport was impossible and ration, arms and ammunition, medical supplies could not be sent to them. Hence, an withdrawal was decided upon till the next opportunity. I. N. A. Soldiers were famished and without clothing but they worked on and on and when unable, they sat on the road side preferring death to surrender."

### END OF THE FIRST CAMPAIGN

In an order of the Day issued to the Azad Hind Fauj on August 1, 1944, Netaji Subhas Chandra reviewed the activities of the period in the following words :—

"In the middle of March, 1944, advanced unit of the Azad Hind Fauj, with Imperial Nippon forces crossed the Indo-Burma border and the fight for Indian liberation thereupon commenced on Indian soil.

"The British authorities by ruthlessly exploiting India for over a century and bringing foreign soldiers to fight their battles for them had managed to put up a mighty force against us. After crossing the Indo-Burma border, our forces, inspired by the righteousness of our cause encountered these numerically superior and better equipped but heterogenous and disunited forces of the enemy and defeated them in every battle.

"Our units with their better training and discipline and unshakable determination to do or die on the path of India's freedom soon established their superiority over the enemy whose morale deteriorated with each defeat. Fighting under the most trying conditions, our officers and men displayed such courage and heroism that they have earned the praise of everybody. With their blood and sacrifice, these heroes have established their traditions which the future soldiers of Free India shall have to uphold.

"All preparations had been completed and the stage had been set for the final assault on Imphal when torrential rains overtook us and to carry Imphal by an assault was rendered a tactical impossibility.

"Handicapped by the elements, we were forced to postpone our offensive. After the postponement of our offensive it was found disadvantageous for our troops to continue to hold the line that we then had.

"For securing a more favourable defensive position it was considered advisable to withdraw our troops. In accordance with this decision, our troops were withdrawn to a more favourable defensive position. We shall now utilise the period of lull in completing our preparations so that with the advent of better weather we may be in a position to resume our offensive."

"Having beaten the enemy once in the several sectors of the front, our faith in our final victory and in the destruction of the Anglo-American Forces of aggression increased ten-fold. As soon as all our preparations are complete, we shall launch a mighty offensive against our enemies once again, with superior fighting qualities, dauntless courage and unshakable devotion to duty of our officers and men. Victory shall surely be ours."

"The souls of those heroes, who have fallen in this campaign inspire us to still greater deeds of heroism and bravery in the next phase of India's war of liberation."

#### BLOOD—THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

The result of the campaign did not depress Netaji. He took it stoically and pushed more vigourously his programme of total mobilisation. In a speech delivered on July, 4, 1944, Netaji said :—

"Friends, one year ago, when I made certain demands of you, I told you that if you give me "Total Mobilisation", I would give you a 'Second Front'. I have redeemed that pledge. The first phase of our campaign is over. Our victorious troops, fighting side by side with Nipponese troops, have pushed back the enemy and are now fighting bravely on the sacred soil of our dear motherland."

"Gird up your loins for the task that now lies ahead. I had asked you for men, money and materials. I have got them in a generous measure. Now I demand more of you. Men, money and materials cannot by themselves bring victory or freedom. We must have the motive-power that will inspire us to brave deeds and heroic exploits."

"It will be a fatal mistake for you to wish to live and see India free—simply because victory is now within reach. No one here should have the desire to live to enjoy freedom. A long fight is still in front of us."

“We should have but one desire today—the desire to die so that India may live—the desire to face a martyr’s death, so that the path to freedom may be paved with the martyr’s blood.”

“Friends, my comrades in the War of Liberation, today, I demand of you—one thing, above all. I demand of you—Blood. It is blood alone that can avenge the blood that the enemy has spilt. It is blood alone that can pay the price of freedom. Give me blood and I promise you freedom.”

This “Blood Campaign” could not however, be started till December, 1944. In the meantime, certain important reforms were carried out in the Army mainly for the purposes of better training and greater discipline.

#### RANI OF JHANSI REGIMENT

The Rani of Jhansi Regiment, which was entrusted with the duties of attending to the sick and the injured soldiers, was getting anxious for participating in military operations in the front. The brave women, who formed the Rani of Jhansi Regiment under the Command of Capt. Lakshmi Swaminathan, had the benefit of complete military training in their own camp and they now insisted on having an equal share with the men in their trials and tribulations connected with India’s war of liberation. Volunteers in large number had poured in for training, and, so great was the enthusiasm, that women of all ranks and of all ages joined the Regiment. The military part of the training was similar to that of the Infantry and consisted of Drill, like Squad Drill, Platoon Drill, Company Drill, etc.; Weapon training in the use of 303 Rifles, Bayonets, Tommy Guns, Bren Guns, Revolvers, Grenades and Sword; Military Tactics in Attack, Defence, Consolidation, Patrolling, Scouting, Jungle Warfare, Battle-formation etc.; Map-reading which included Compass-bearings, Setting and Finding of positions, Enlargement etc., and a course of General Knowledge of the great men of the world, History, Geography, Hygiene and lessons in Roman Hindusthani.

Every day in the camp began with the hoisting of the National Flag and the singing of the National Anthem. Then, under the banner of the Free Government, the members of the Regiment, dressed in the I. N. A. uniform, met together to offer their prayers to the Almighty and to renew the oath

of allegiance to their Motherland and to Netaji. Every day, in the congregational prayer, they sought the strength which could enable them to make a sacrifice of their lives for redeeming their pledge to Netaji.

Every recruit had to undergo a preliminary training for 3 months to qualify herself for the rigours of a full-fledged military life and to obtain the three colours of the I. N. A. But, once she was absorbed into the I. N. A., she had to live a camp-life of hard work, rigid routine and strict discipline. The colourful saris were discarded by these gallant girls recruited from all over East Asia, and on all ceremonial occasions, they had to wear breeches and shirts; and, for every day work they had their slacks, shirts, side caps, soft putties, ammunition boots. Here is an account of their camp-life from the pen of one of them :—

"Near the entrance of the camp the first thing to attract anybody's attention used to be the Guards, dressed smartly with belts and swords and carrying rifles on their shoulders moving about with an air of responsibility. The Guard Commander and her guards remained all alert. Inside the camp, the flag-post and the armoury always had sentries guarding them and carrying out the usual duties of a sentry. From time to time, the Duty Officer for the day or the week would be seen going round the camp and checking the activities and discipline not only of the guards but of all the members in the camps. Early in the morning, over the whole parade ground would be scattered the different platoons occupying different parts of the field, doing P. T. vigorously. At the end of the period all the members would come to attention with the whistle and then disperse by order of their respective Commanders. Perspiring and panting, would all of them run back to their barracks for their plates and mugs and with these in hand would line up in front of the kitchen for their breakfast. On such occasions, respective platoon Havildars would be in charge of their discipline. They would all sit together and enjoy their breakfast after such heavy physical exercise. With the next whistle they would all be seen with ammunition boots and weapons falling in on the parade ground and awaiting orders from their Chief Instructor. With the 'march off' order the Platoon Commanders

would take charge of their own platoons and carry on with their subjects, such as, marching, drilling, W. T. and tactics. Training for the recruits, for the regular soldiers and special classes for N. C. Os. (non-commissioned officers) and officers went on side by side. Some would be seen with compasses taking down bearings and preparing charts and schemes, some commanding parades while others actually carrying out operations with their respective platoons. This was the most busy part of the day. After the classes, the girls would break off and take their bath and wash and then get together at lunch time which used to be I. P. M. In the afternoons, there used to be mostly lecture classes of which one was, every day, on Roman Hindusthani. Great stress was laid on this class. Twice a week the girls had to go for route marches. Well, at the beginning they couldn't do much—first day 6 miles which gradually increased. Platoon by platoon with their commander in front, with packs on their back, rifles on shoulders, and putting on boots and putties, they used to march on singing their favourite marching song and keeping step. Once a group of them had to march down from Maymyo to Mandalay which is a distance of 44 miles up hills and down dales. They covered 22 miles in a day walking 6 hours, and then they stopped at a place—cooked, ate and packed their mess tins for the next day and then rested for the night. Next day, early in the morning, they started off and finished the journey. Whenever they felt tired they sang and laughed and talked and compared themselves to their brothers fighting against such heavy odds at the front. That was what gave them strength and that was what carried them through. Well, they really enjoyed it and even now remember it."

The strength of the Army rose to 1000 and 50 of them who had seen the front received decorations. The commandant of the Regiment, Lt. Col. Lakshmi Swaminathan, "a woman of ever-cheerful and striking personality" was universally adored in East Asia. A member of the Jhansi Regiment says, "The commandant, Dr. Lakshmi, was no less than Rani Lakshmi Bai, in her leadership, her spirit, and her capacity. Her wonderful personality won the hearts of every member of the Regiment. All the members looked up to her with great devotion and regarded her as one of their most dear and near ones." Her untiring zeal

and unflinching devotion to the cause of Indian Freedom, her wonderful organising capacity, utter fearlessness and supreme self-sacrifice were appreciated even by Netaji, who said, "She is a wonderful child—God bless her."

The Rani of Jhansi Regiment would bear eloquent testimony to Netaji's ideal of equality between men and women. It accomplished within the short span of a year what a movement for emancipation of women could not achieve in half-a-century. The two women Ministers of the Azad Hind Government had their places in the Cabinet not by the sufferance of the men-folk—the splendid contributions made by the Rani of Jhansi Regiment amply justified their claim to high office under the State. The members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were always actuated by a desire to share the burden of the I. N. A. men. As said by one of the Jhansi officers, "If men can die on the battlefield, why not women?"

The experience gained during the months of March to August instilled in the women warriors new vim, new vigour, new passion for a fight with the forces of British Imperialism and the dangers that lay in their way of march to Delhi could not damp their enthusiasm. Netaji could no longer deny them the glory of being a fighting force.

#### "NETAJI DAY" IN THE EAST

True, that the men at the front had died like flies due to starvation and many had committed suicide to avoid the pangs of hunger, and many more had eked out the most miserable existence by eating grass for want of food, but all these were small privations to men who had taken the vow of liberating millions of starving souls in India. What depressed them most were the occasional cases of desertion from the Azad Hind Fauj. Netaji Subhas Chandra, as the Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, moved from camp to camp calling upon the vacillating elements to withdraw themselves from the Fauj.

On July 7, Netaji day was observed by the army and messages were received by Netaji reaffirming the army's allegiance towards him. Messages were also exchanged between the Azad Hind Govt. and the Imperial Govt. of Nippon assuring mutual help in their struggle for the attainment of the common objective viz,

the destruction of British Imperialism. It was only a year that Netaji Subhas Chandra had undertaken the leadership of the Indian Independence League and by his close contact with the rank and file of the Azad Hind Fauj, he had become a comrade-in-arms to everybody. When he came to them, they knew him as a prince among Indian patriots and had only heard of his sufferings for the cause of the motherland. Now that he was with them and lived as one of them, partaking of the same meal, sleeping in the same barrack for only two hours a day, speaking to them for hours together as a comrade talks to a comrade and attending to their multifarious wants—even when in the thick of a life and death struggle, the men and women of the Azad Hind Fauj came to look upon him as a leader, divinely inspired whom they were to follow in all their acts and worship in the heart of their hearts. The Netaji day, therefore, was a day for the searching of their own heart. The little anecdotes, which we have so far heard from the men and women of the Azad Hind Fauj, only illustrate the love that Netaji had for the men and women of his fighting forces and the veneration with which they reciprocated his love. The story goes that once, while inspecting military hospital of the Azad Hind Fauj, Netaji met a wounded soldier who had no coat on his person. Netaji took off his own coat and persuaded the soldier to accept it. This was more than the soldier could believe even in his dream. Wild with joy—he shouted, “Jai Hind”, bowed his head, and said: “I shall keep this and never use it before India is free. After freedom is achieved, I shall use it with pride.”

An interesting account of Netaji's love for his soldiers was narrated by Mr. P. G. Samson, Personal Body-Guard to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to the representative of the United Press of India. Mr. Samson said that many times he saw Netaji going through bombing and machine gunning in his concern for the safety of I. N. A. soldiers. Once, in February, 1945, the British planes heavily bombed the Myang I. N. A. Hospital in Rangoon. The building was a four-storied one and there was a big Red Cross sign on the roof. Netaji got the information, while the raid was on, and readily got into his car. The driver politely declined to drive Netaji, into the fire. Netaji, in his impatience



cried out, 'Hell with your bombing. My men are dying and should I keep myself in the bed room?' Drive on'. On the way to the hospital the car was strafed by raiders and it dashed against a wayside building. Netaji was narrowly saved and ran towards the hospital. There he saw the havoc wrought by the British planes. There were about 600 I. N. A. personnel among whom about 200 died. Netaji murmured 'What have they done.' Tears rolled down his cheeks. .

Mr. Samson added : Netaji never cared for his life. He often used to say : 'Who am I ? They are all. They are the rising sun of Free India'.

"I saw him spending nights with ailing soldiers nursing them with his own hands. His presence also gave the soldiers psychological relief. And, in fact, I saw many soldiers groaning with pain before Netaji's coming and when Netaji talked to them they were much relieved", said Mr. Samson.

Even the young boys, who were sent by Netaji to State Military Academy at Tokyo as Azad Hind Cadets, could claim a large portion of his time and affection. The personal care which he took of these young boys would be quite evident from a letter we reproduce below :—

"My dear boys—On the eve of my taking off from the soil of Japan, I want to send you my love and all good wishes for the success of your work. I have no son of my own. You are to me more than my own son, because you have dedicated your life for that which is the one and only goal of my life—the freedom of 'Bharatmata'. I am sorry I could not see you again before leaving, but you know I am always with you in spirit. God bless you. Jai Hind."

The calm tranquility of Netaji's mind in the face of grave danger had made him the object of adoration. Lieutenant A. C. Nair of the Azad Hind Fauj lately narrated the story of how a man infiltrated the ranks of the sentries, posted in and outside the compound of Netaji Subhas' Chandra Bose's residence, with a revolver with 32 rounds, with the intention of shooting Netaji, and how after he was detected, Netaji calmly came out of his room to talk with him. It was in the month of February, 1944, and the night was dark. Netaji was having a talk with the officers of the Fauj then marching towards India.

As usual, two sections of guards were on duty at Netaji's residence. One section of 5 N. C. O. men who wore Mufti and carried Thompson I. M. guns and revolvers were guarding outside by moving round the compound. The other section of 8 men in uniform used to patrol outside the compound. The outside guards were changed every hour. On that memorable day, at 11 in the night, one batch of outside sentries returned to the quarters on being released by the succeeding batch. The light there was dark but the guard commander had the premonition of some evil. It somehow struck him that there was an extra man in the quarter. He ordered all the men to fall in and to give their number, name and rank. Two of the fifty or sixty men gave the same number, name, rank and company commander's name. The guard commander separated the two, when one of them whipped out a revolver. The man nearby seized the revolver after a strenuous struggle and great commotion. Netaji asked from upstairs what the noise was about. The culprit shouted, "I came to kill you for being a traitor to India. I had my revolver and 32 rounds. It might have been enough. But this son of a dog officer spoiled my effort. I have been successful upto this but be careful others too are on the way. Netaji felt curious and wanted to come down and have a talk with the culprit. But the officers requested him not to have anything to do with the culprit and forcibly removed the culprit from the spot."

Anecdotes, like this, can be narrated galore and they only go to show with what love, reverence and humanity of spirit the Azad Hind Fauj had reasons to look upon Netaji.

To encourage acts of gallantry an I. N. A. order was issued under instructions from Captain Selgal, the military secretary. It announced that henceforth the Provisional Government of Azad Hind will award a new medal called "Samgha-e-Shatru Nash" to those members of the Azad Hind Fauj, who would exhibit conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in killing or capturing alive any British or American officer or other rank.

#### **"SACRIFICE EVERYTHING, GIVE YOUR ALL"**

The one stumbling bloc in the way of the Azad Hind Fauj during the last campaign was want of funds. As early as

October, 1943, in connection with his campaign for "Total Mobilisation" he had said :—

"Legally speaking there is no private property when a country is in a state of war. The Government has absolute right over the lives and properties of its people during such emergencies. We too are a free people with a free Government.

"If you think that your wealth and possessions are your own, you are living in delusion. Every life and every property belongs to the nation when it is involved in a war. Your lives and your properties do not now belong to you ; they belong to India and India alone.

"I have every confidence that if you realise this simple truth that we have to achieve independence by any means and at any cost, and that we are now a free people in a state of war, you will realise that nothing belongs to you, that your lives, properties and everything are no more your own.....

"The I. N. A. has no plan of saving its life by retreat. When the I. N. A. is getting trained either to march to victory or to spill its last drop of blood on the way, the rich people are asking me whether 'Total Mobilisation' means 10 per cent. I would ask these people who are speaking of percentages, whether we can tell our soldiers to fight and spill only 10 per cent. of their blood and save the rest. .

"You could see with your own eyes the spirit which is permeating our young men who have become recruits and our sisters who have rallied to the colours. Fortunately, we are not short of men. The response has been so great that we have enough recruits to get prepared even for a long war.

"What we are wanting is similar response in money and materials. If we are all poor, then we would be justified in seeking foreign help, but there are also rich people amongst us and our foreign friends also know it. When our own people have ample resources, it is sheer disgrace for us to stretch our hands to others for help.....

"In the same way as youngmen have come forward to offer their lives, the poor classes have been coming forward voluntarily and

with enthusiastic spirit to offer everything that they have. Poorer classes of Indians like watchmen, washermen, barbers, petty shop keepers and 'Gowalas' have come forward with all that they have.

"And in addition to that some of them have also offered to become volunteers. Some friends ask me what I mean by the word 'Total Mobilisation'. These poor men, who have volunteered not only their possessions but also their lives, have demonstrated by their own example the exact meaning of the word 'Total Mobilisation.'

"Some of these poor people came to me, and not only did they give all the cash they had in their pockets, but went further and gave me their 'Savings Bank Books' which represent their lives' savings."

#### AZAD HIND BANK

Since April, 1944, Netaji directed his mind more towards the collection of money than towards the recruiting of men. The "Rebel Daughter of India" with the Rani of Jhansi Regiment gives in her Diary the following account of how in April, 1944, the National Bank of Azad Hind came into existence. "Netaji was discussing finance problems with a Muslim multi-millionaire here in Rangoon. He suggested to him that we must have our own Bank, because a government without a Bank is unheard of. Again, as soon as Imphal falls, our government could be issuing its own currency, and a Bank will be invaluable then. Netaji asked our friend, the multi-millionaire, to offer his suggestions.

"The reply came in the form of a question, 'Netaji, with how much capital do you wish to make a beginning?' Subhas Babu suggested that fifty-lakhs would suffice for the purpose. Prompt was the answer, 'oh-ho, is that all you want? Then, I myself shall give you 30 lakhs, and the rest of the 20 lakhs I guarantee to present to you in a week's time.'

"And, within a fortnight, our Bank had taken legal shape and opened its door to business. Shares totalled 50 lakhs, out of which, 25 lakhs was paid up capital. The Bank was registered under the Burmese law of Registration. Its cheques are as good

as the rupee notes in current use. All businessmen accept them and actually prefer them to Jap currency."

"Public response has been so good and our credit so stable, that by now three branches have been opened—and there is a demand for five more. The bank keeps all the cash resources of our government."

But, wherefrom came these Cash Reserves without which the Azad Hind Fauj could not again move to the front? They came mostly from willing donors and auction-purchasers of Netaji's garlands in public meetings and also from the levy imposed by the Azad Hind Government. Five Indians gave away all they had for the League. One of them, Mr. Habib, donated nearly a crore of rupees. All these five persons were awarded "Sevaki Hind Medals." The Government wanted 15 crores of rupees for the Azad Hind Fauj, and, at times, Netaji had to pass anxious moments for want of money. "Once, in the month of May, Netaji was at the Aerodrome about to fly to Syonan (Singapore) on urgent business. He looked very pre-occupied. Our leaders who had come to see him off did not know what was preying on his mind. A wealthy chettiar approached Netaji and asked if it was possible to know the cause of his worries. Netaji answered: "It was a question of finance. I do not think you in Rangoon can solve my problem. I want 20 lakhs of rupees, and at once, for our Fauj regiments. Our Fauj is in a critical condition and immediate reinforcements have to be sent."

"In the meantime, the aeroplane was ready to fly away, and Netaji got into his seat. For some unknown reason the plane was delayed by ten minutes. The chettiar took the problem to the assembled leaders. Quick decisions were taken. And before the plane flew away, Subhas Babu was given the list of donors to the twenty-lakhs he had asked for—the whole sum having been contributed by those present."

### THE SECOND CAMPAIGN

Blessed were the men who had such a leader to inspire them. The projects of the Azad Hind Fauj were financed in this way by a band of homeless fakirs who had, at last, found a leader whom they could follow. In December, 1944, therefore, the

Second Campaign started with a comparatively better financial backing than the first one. The entire conduct of the war was this time guided by a War Council of the Azad Hind Government. The War Co-operation Council, formed with the representatives of the Imperial Nippon Government and the Azad Hind Government, without a Chairman, as suggested by Netaji, was in charge of operations carried on jointly by the armies of the two governments. But the War Co-operation Council was losing its importance by the end of the year 1944. A very marked change was discernible in the attitude of Japan. The repeated reverses of Hitler's forces on the western fronts had so completely unnerved Japan that she grew lukewarm in her support to the Azad Hind Government. Even in the matter of supply of arms and ammunition in exchange of money she grew so niggardly that Netaji had to run to Tokyo to give the Nippon Chiefs a piece of his mind.

Difficulties, however great, could not deter Netaji. Even before the December campaign had started, regiments of the Azad Hind Fauj were engaged in minor fights and skirmishes in parts of Burma and Netaji inspected and addressed these regiments. "On October 21, 1944, he had himself gone to Mingladan to inspect the First Infantry Brigade and stood face to face with death. His address to the Brigade being over, the First Battalion of the Brigade had orders to march past. Just then a few Japanese fighters were seen overhead. The air-raid siren was sounded and a number of fast fighter planes started diving and machine-gunning. The defence Ack-Acks were putting up a strong barrage. Mingladan Cantonment area too was getting a good pounding. The aerodrome was machine-gunned and bombed. Huge smoke covered the sky, below it stood Netaji unperturbed. He was taking the Salute. The officers with him implored him to go into the trench. But he did not budge an inch from the dais and replied: "All these three thousand freedom-fighters can stand here without even a speck of fear in their countenance, am I to be afraid about myself"? The planes were strafing that area with machine-guns from a low-level. Bullets were whizzing past the parade ground. The Japanese Ack-Acks were firing from a low angle. One Ack-Ack shell, it so happened, came so low that it hit a tree and re-bounded. The re-bounded shell

struck a soldier fatally. Netaji stood like Ceasar after the Roman fashion, and waved his hand. The Brigade dispersed and took positions. Some of the high ranking I. N. A. officers actually dragged Netaji to a shelter. Just then a plane flew at a high speed, about two feet above Netaji's head, spraying its load as it went, chased by a Jap plane."

His total indifference to all considerations of personal safety made the I. N. A. officers extremely anxious; but Netaji always used to laugh away their advice by saying that the British had not been able to make that bullet yet which could kill Subhas Bose. In the front line, he always moved in military uniform, with ten day's ration on his back, and carried a pistol and a sword and used to pay surprise visits to any battalion he liked.

Inspired by such examples of calm heroism on the part of Netaji, the 2nd Division marched towards Popa Hills and the 2nd Infantry Regiment under the Command of Lt. Col. Seghal made preparations for raiding Pyinbin. Addressing Major Dhillon's Regiment, Netaji said, "Last year, the I. N. A. faced the enemy on battlefield for the first time. The deeds of the I. N. A. were so glorious that they were beyond my expectations and won the praise of both friend and foe. We dealt the enemies a crushing defeat wherever we fought them without being defeated. We had, as a tactical move, to bring back our forces from the Imphal front due to bad weather and other handicaps. Now we have tried to overcome these difficulties. But everyone should remember that our army is a revolutionary army. We are not so well equipped in manpower as our enemies are. Our enemies have decided that they will fight their first battle of the defence of India in Assam and they have made this area India's Stalingrad. This year will be the decisive year of the War. The fate of India's freedom will be decided near the hills of Imphal and on the plains of Chittagong.

"Last year some of our men joined the enemy. I do not want even a single man to go over to the enemy this time when we go to the front. Therefore, if anyone think that he is incapable of going to the front due to weakness or cowardice or for any other reason, he should report to his regimental

commander and arrangements will be made to keep him at the base.

"I do not wish to paint a rosy picture to you. You will have to face hunger, thirst, and other hardships and even death when you go to the front. Because the enemy has made the utmost preparation, we too shall have to mobilise all our resources.

"In addition to the present slogan, of the I. N. A., i.e. "Chalo Delhi", another slogan will be added from to-day, and that will be, "Blood, blood and more blood." This means that we shall shed our blood for the freedom of 400,000,000 people of India. Similarly, we shall shed the blood of the enemy, for the same cause. The slogans for Indian civilians who are in the south will be "Nichawar Sub Karo, Hao Sub Fakir" "Sacrifice everything, Give your all."

The Regiment first assembled at Popa and then two of its companies moved to Meyne for the purpose of raiding Pyinbin. One column of 'A' company marched towards the west of Toungoo for the purpose of carrying out the raid. The Japanese officers and the Japanese sections co-operating with the raiding company were also placed under the command of the I. N. A. officers. A platoon with a Japanese section set out under the command of an I. N. A. officer towards the east of Toungoo to direct the enemy's attention from the raiding party in the west. The story goes that at the very sound of firing the Japanese ran away until they were sharply rebuked by the I. N. A. officer who took out his pistol and fired at the enemy.

### CHARGE OF THE IMMORTALS

At about this time, the 4th Guerilla Regiment was fighting at Legy. Two acts of bravery deserve special mention in this connection. On March 16, Dhillon recorded what he called a "Charge of the Immortals." On that date, according to Dhillon's account, the company of Azad Hind Fauj under the command of 2nd Lieutenant Gian Singh Bisht fought a column of motorised infantry of the Indian Army with nothing but rifles and compelled them to retreat. The other incident took place on the same date and was recorded by Col. Shah



Nawaz. The entry in his diary ran thus, "Khan Mahd. attacked Sandi and Point 1186. He had a fierce hand to hand fighting for two hours, inflicted at least two hundred casualties on the enemy. Fighting lasted from 03—00 hours to 06—00 hours. Men fought gloriously shouting "Netaji Ki Jai." Our casualties were 1 killed and 2 wounded."

By March, 1945, cases of desertion from Azad Hind Fauj were frequently reported to Netaji. To prevent such disgraceful occurrences, Netaji personally visited the troops at the fronts disregarding all the entreaties of his officers who implored him not to take the risk of his own life. By an order of the day he gave a week's time to all wavering minds to withdraw from the Azad Hind Fauj if they so desired. Then he issued an order to the effect that every member of the Azad Hind Fauj—officers, N. C. O. or Sepoy would, in future, be entitled to arrest any other member of the Azad Hind Fauj, no matter what his rank might be, if he behaved in a cowardly manner or to shoot him if he acted treacherously. It was during this time that the speeches of Netaji and his orders of the day were regularly broadcasted to the troops at the front and the people fought keeping Netaji's portrait in the vanguard. But all was not well in the Army. The Nippon Government were definitely proving unhelpful. To drive away all traces of pessimism from the mind of the fighting forces, Netaji in a letter addressed to Dhillon said, "Whatever happens, to us individually in the course of this heroic struggle, there is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved any longer. Whether we live and work, and whether we die fighting, we must, under all circumstances have complete confidence that the cause for which we are striving is bound to triumph. It is the finger of God that is pointing the way towards India's freedom. We have only to do our duty and to pay the price of India's liberty. Our hearts are with you and with all those who are with you in the present struggle which is paving the way to our national salvation. Please convey my warmest greetings to all the officers and men under you and accept same yourself. Jai Hind." The reply that Maj. Dhillon sent to Netaji is worth being quoted, "Not words, only tears could express my feelings. I fully realise that inspite of reason which may be produced I have not only failed to do what I voluntarily promised but have been the

only Regimental Commander to bring humiliation to you and to the Azad Hind Fauj. I have no face to promise again. My actions will do so". Brave Dhillon's promise by action was made within a week. On March, 19, 1945, Sehgal wrote in his diary "News from Dhillon. His fellows are putting up a brave show ; they attacked a hill 3 times and eventually captured it and killed about 300 enemies ; his casualties have been heavy too."

The British Indian troops had in March, 1945, entered into Burma and the capture of Mandalay was completed by the British 14th Army on the 20th March, 1945. The Japanese were retreating in hot haste. But the Azad Hind Fauj was still offering resistance. On March 31, Legye was bombed by 12 British planes for 3 or 4 hours and two days thereafter they surrounded Legye and shelled it. The Echelon area was captured by the British Battalion and Lt. Col. Sehgal ordered his 1st Battalion to recapture Echelon. Thirty minutes later, the company commander reported to Sehgal that his men had attacked the enemy with such vigour, shouting 'Jai Hind' and 'Delhi Chalo' that the enemy had run away. Simultaneously, the news reached Lt. Col. Sehgal, that one of his Battalion Commander, Lt. Khazin Shah with 2 officers and men had deserted the Fauj. The news was too disheartening and Sehgal decided to withdraw his forces to Popa hill. While there, they were bombed by British planes but units remained in their positions. They stayed there for about 8 days. Sehgal called a conference attended by Regimental Staff officers and Battalion officers and told them that the Regiment would move from Popa to Taung Wingi on April, 12. Accordingly, they marched towards Taung Wingi but learnt on the way that the place had fallen to the enemy. Sehgal, at once, ordered the Regiment to proceed to Prome. On April, 20, they reached near Allanmyo and learnt that Allanmyo had been captured by the enemy and the Regiment took their position at Nagingan Village. There a conference was called by Sehgal who explained how the main route to Prome was blocked by the enemy. Three courses were then open to them ; first, to fight their way out of the enemy lines as they had done before, secondly, to disguise themselves as civilians, thirdly, to become prisoners of war. After an hour's consideration, the conference adopted the third course. Thereafter, Sehgal sent a note to be given to the officer of the allied forces.

It was on April 28th, 1945, that Lt. Col. J. A. Kitson of the 4/2nd Gurkha Rifles received Sehgal's note signifying the Regiment's desire to surrender as prisoners of war or to die fighting, if they were to be treated otherwise than as prisoners of war. Sehgal and his Regiment then surrendered under a White Flag.

Col. Shah Nawaz also felt at the time that the Azad Hind Fauj was completely left in the lurch by the Japanese. On April 18, 1945, the British had occupied Taung Wingly and the next day, the British Tanks and Carriers reached Magwe. By the 13th of May, 1945, Shah Nawaz and his Battalion were completely cut off and the last entry in Shah Nawaz's diary, dated May 17, 1945, written at about midnight, ran thus. 'Entering the village of Sitapinzeix. We were heavily fired upon by men of 2/1 Punjab Regiment from a range of 15 yards. Civilian guide was killed. I lost my bag, spent a night in Jungle for 8 hours, started and found all routes blocked. At 18 hours captured by 2/1 and taken to Pegu Div. H. Q. and jail.' Thus the gallant patriot who had hoisted the National Flag of the Azad Hind Government on the Indian soil and had actually entered into Kohima with his troops occupying 1,500 sq. miles of Kohima became a prisoner in British hands.

#### NETAJI LEAVES BURMA

( On May 3, 1945, Rangoon surrendered to the British forces. The Japanese had actually started the evacuation of Rangoon on April 23, 1945. On April 17, 1945, Netaji issued his last Order of the Day. Addressing the officers and the men of the Azad Hind Fauj he said : "It is with a heavy heart that I am leaving Burma—the scene of many heroic battles that we have fought since February, 1944, and are yet fighting. In Imphal and Burma, we have lost the first round in our fight for independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstance. Your brave deeds in the battles against the enemy on the plains of Imphal, the hills and jungles of Arakan and the oil-field area and other localities in Burma will live in the history of our struggle for Independence for all time. )

"Comrades !—At this critical hour, I have only one word of command to give you, and that is that if you have to go down

temporarily, then go down as heroes; go down upholding the highest code of honour and discipline. The future generation of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifice, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forefathers, who fought and lost the battle in Manipur, Assam and Burma, paved the way to ultimate success and glory. My unshakable faith in India's liberation remains unaltered. I am leaving in your safe hands our National Tri-colour, our national honour and the best traditions of Indian warriors. I have no doubt whatsoever that you, the Vanguard of India's army of liberation, will sacrifice everything, even life itself, to uphold India's national honour so that your comrades who will continue the fight elsewhere may have before them your shining example to inspire them at all times.

"If I had my own way, I would have preferred to stay with you in adversity and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But, on the advice of my Ministers and high-ranking officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for emancipation. Knowing my countrymen in East Asia and inside India, I can assure you that they can continue the fight under all circumstances and that all your sufferings and sacrifices will not be in vain. So far as I am concerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on October 21, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interest of 28 crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion, to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe, like myself, that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free—and before long. May God bless you! Inquilab Zindabad! Azad Hind Zindabad! Jai Hind!"

(On April, 24, Netaji left Rangoon. Perhaps, he would have been taken a captive by the British, if he had persisted in his refusal to leave Rangoon a few hours more. With tears in their eyes, the Ministers and officers begged of him to leave Burma and to continue the struggle from somewhere else. He left Rangoon by road and it took three full weeks to cover the 300 odd miles to Bangkok. As he proceeded, he could actually hear the distant boom of advancing British artillery.) Prior to his departure he appointed Col. Loganadan as G. O. C. Burma Command, and

Capt. Arshad as Chief of Staff to Col. Loganadan. Netaji told them that he was leaving behind this I. N. A. contingent for the sole purpose of protecting the Indian Civilians in Rangoon. The contingent was charged with taking over the control of Rangoon till the allied troops arrived. He instructed them to surrender as prisoners of war to allied representatives in an orderly manner.

(Thus, Netaji of Azad Hind Fauj, who had severed himself from all worldly attachments and like a flaming sword of liberty had crossed meteor-like out of the British jail and then out of the British territory into Afghanistan and from there to Berlin and then to Tokyo and Rangoon, once again started his pilgrimage for unknown lands in search of India's freedom.) (Here was a man who in his struggle for freedom could not be dissuaded from the path of danger by the incessant tears of an old mother but who could himself weep like a child at the sight of the dilapidated grave in Rangoon of Emperor Bahadur Shah—the last of the Emperors to fight the British. He knew no mother other than Mother India and had no brother other than his Comrades-in-arms.) The brave who had fought for freedom in the past were his kith and kin, no matter whether he was Emperor Bahadur Shah or Jose Rizal, the Phillipine's No. 1 patriot and martyr at whose statue at Luneta Park in Manila, Netaji kept gazing for several long tense minutes when he placed the wreath at the statue. (The story goes that as Netaji was making preparation for leaving Rangoon a Burmese patriot brought for him a white horse and, dressed as a Burmese, Netaji left Rangoon on horseback. The Army he left behind, however, carried out his instructions faithfully.)

#### SURRENDER OF RANGOON

(An Anglo-Indian daily of Calcutta, The Statesman, entertained its readers with a highly dramatic and fantastic story of how an Australian prisoner of war peeped out of his jail after Rangoon had been evacuated by the Japanese and majestically ordered the Azad Hind Fauj to surrender their arms to him and made them execute his orders till the allied "Invasion Troops" reached Rangoon. This, however, is sheer bunkum. Rangoon had, at the time, nearly 7000 I. N. A. men fully armed. The men of Burma Defence Army were then either in the hiding or

beyond Rangoon.) Capt. Arshad, as stated before, following the instructions left by Netaji, took over the control of different I. N. A. Camps and drafted a plan for patrolling, policing and doing guard duties by these contingents in localities where Indians resided in large numbers. Captain Arshad saw the Acting Prime Minister of the Burmese Government in Rangoon and explained to him his plan of action. He appreciated this move of the I. N. A. and sent his Chief Police Officer to Captain Arshad and placed the services of the Burmese Police Force at his disposal for night-patrolling of Rangoon.

Captain Arshad went to the jail and made contact with the senior-most P. O. W. who happened to be a Wing-commander of R. A. A. F. Captain Arshad offered to surrender the whole contingent of I. N. A. to him, but he asked the I. N. A. men to continue their work of maintaining order in Rangoon.

(The Japanese had evacuated the town, but even on the sixth day following such evacuation, the allied planes came over Rangoon bombing and strafing. Rangoon was an open city but there was no trace of the Allied forces. The civilians suffered immensely in utter suspense) and Captain Arshad brought to Wing Commander Hudson a transmitter but the latter could not send out a message to the Allied forces as he was not aware of the wave-lengths. (On or about the 3rd May, the I. N. A. Commandant at Mingaladon signalled down a British Aeroplane. The British Air Force officer saw Wing Commander Hudson, and at his order the British Air Force officer took an I. N. A. officer with him to inform the British Fleet that Rangoon was an open city.) Wing Commander Hudson also informed Captain Arshad that one thousand allied paratroops had landed the Rangoon Port Area and were moving to Rangoon and he advised the I. N. A. to hoist large white flags to avoid further bombing of the Rangoon area.)

On May, 4, the Allied troops landed on the Rangoon river-side. Capt. Arshad went there to meet Brig. Lauder of the 26th Indian Infantry Brigade and told him that the I. N. A. had instructions to surrender. Brig. Lauder asked Capt. Arshad to collect all arms and military equipments from I. N. A. camps and to send these materials to his Head quarters. The

next day, Brig Lauder told Col. Loganadan and Capt. Arshad that the I. N. A. should continue as "National Army" and patrol the predominantly Indian quarters as their withdrawal was followed by two murders in Tongyangyan district.

(Thus the curtain was wrung on the activities of the Provisional Azad Hind Government and the Azad Hind Fauj.) The above account of their short but glorious life is by no means complete. (History will one day reveal their many more acts of patriotism and bravery which will enthrone the brave men and women of the Indian National Army into the hearts of posterity.) How very little is known of the heroism and military achievements of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment! Throughout our accounts of the military operations of the Azad Hind Fauj, we have not mentioned their presence in any of the many fronts in Arakan, Burma and Imphal. The reports from authentic sources, so far received, clearly indicate that the brave women belonging to the Rani of Jhansi Regiment fought side by side with the men of the Azad Hind Fauj. The members of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment always carried poison with them to protect their honour even by ending their lives in the event of any attempted molestation. "I have already procured a small bottle of Potassium Cyanide" wrote a member of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment to her husband. "If the Japs attempt to molest my body", she continued, "I shall not be helpless. If you hear me, beloved, know that I shall not quake before the most ruthless torture. I shall keep the honour and prestige of your family name untainted." The military training the Rani of Jhansi Regiment had received was put to very severe test at Moulmein where the Rani of Jhansi Regiment fought with the Allied soldiers and held up Allied advance for 16 hours at a stretch. It was no mean achievement in view of the fact that while the allied forces fought with heavy arms and ammunition, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment fought only with rifles and bullets. Nothing is known about the authenticity of these published reports of the Regiment's activities in the front. We may state here, that, of late, Lt. Col. Lakshmi Swaminathan has declared that her regiment got no opportunity to play any part in the front.

Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan was holding the rank of

Lt. Col. when she surrendered with her Regiment. She was kept at British H. Q. with the Guerilla forces along with a couple of hundred civilian refugees mostly Gurkha women and children. From there she was brought to Rangoon and was asked to work as a doctor in a British military hospital. Dr. Lakshmi refused to have anything to do with the British and was thereafter released. She was again arrested on November 15, 1945, and has been released in March after being brought down to Dum Dum by plane. In a statement to the Press, she has reaffirmed her oath of Allegiance to Netaji and her determination to continue the fight as one of the I. N. A. Soldier.

### LONG LIVE NETAJI

(On August 24, 1945, news reached India that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose met, on August, 18. With a plane-crash. On his way to Tokyo,) Col. Habibur Rahman, who was accompanying him, (it was further said, jumped out of the plane and found Netaji covered in flames.) In his attempt to put out the flames, Col. Habibur Rahman suffered severe burnt injuries in his hand. (The report concluded with the announcement that Netaji died in a hospital in Japan on the midnight of August 19.)

The only explanation for five day's delay in making Netaji's death known to the public was reported to be the feeling of Japanese authorities that this stunning news would have had repercussion in India. This was the second time during the war that the News Agencies had reported the death of Netaji in India. Later reports furnished further details of how three planes containing Netaji and a few of his important ministers of the Azad Hind Government had left Singapore on August, 18, enroute to Tokyo and how at Taihoku in Formosa, where the planes had broken their journey, the plane carrying Netaji developed engine trouble and while still circling over the airfield, nose dived and crashed at about 4 A. M. and how Netaji covered in burning gasoline was mangled and crushed. Col. Habibur Rahman is further reported to have carried the ashes of Netaji to Tokyo where a funeral service was subsequently held and attended by the I. N. A. Cadets at Tokyo. A certain member of the Azad Hind Fauj, on his return to India, handed over a wrist watch with its



half-burnt leather band to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who, in his turn, gave it to Shri Sarat chandra Bose ; but, since then, it had transpired that the watch was quite different from the one Netaji had when he left India and that the carrier of the same had not received it from Col. Habibur Rahman.

(The news of Netaji's death was received at every quarter in India with a grain of salt.) So great was the distrust of the common man in India that on the 3rd September, 1945, the people at Poona sincerely believed that they had just then seen Netaji entering Gandhiji's hut in the Nature Cure Clinic at Poona and a posse of twenty plain dressed policemen were at once posted all around the hut to arrest the "rebel leader" as he would come out of the clinic. It was for the police a tragedy of error, for the man who came out of the clinic proved to be Shri Sailesh Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Netaji. But the whole episode clearly showed how Indians hoped and yet hope to greet Netaji back to India.

(The Tokyo news was challenged by many who gave out that Netaji must have effected an alliance with Russia, where he had gone prior to the fall of Rangoon.) The grounds on which no credence was placed on the news were very ably summed up by Mr. A. D. Mani, Editor of 'Hitabad' on his return from Burma and Malaya. Mr. Mani said that he met some of the former closest associates of Netaji and made detailed enquiries about the circumstances leading to his disappearance. "Mr. Bose's associates do not believe that his plane crashed and it is stated that on the day he was reported to have been seen in the ill-fated plane in Saigon, in French Indo-China, he was seen at Taiping in Malaya. They further point out that if the plane crashed in Toihoku in Formosa, Mr. Bose should have been taken to Toihoku hospital which is one of the most modern and uptodate hospital. The fact that Mr. Bose was taken to Japan and that too when he was supposed to have been seriously injured, created suspicion. Mr. Bose's associates point out further that inspite of repeated requests made by members of Indian community in Japan that they should be allowed to participate in Mr. Bose's funeral, his funeral was strictly private and nobody knew any thing about it. (Among the allies of

Japan—Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was the most respected and it is inconceivable that he should be buried as an unknown man. Some in Singapore say that two planes left Singapore on the day the news of Japanese surrender was received and one of the planes crashed but the other went to an unknown destination. They believe that Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was in the plane which did not crash. The belief that Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose is not dead is further strengthened by Mr. Bose's own statement in reply to the question how he escaped from India, 'I do not want to divulge the secret to you. I may have to do it again.' The statement speaks for itself.)

(The belief that Netaji is alive has gained fresh momentum from Gandhiji, who for the first time broke his silence on the matter at Midnapore and said that he believed that "Subhas is not dead," and reaffirmed the same belief at Assam. We purposely refrain from any speculation either way. The greatest man of intuition in the world says that Netaji is alive and we pray, most ardently for his long life. "Long live Netaji !")

**PART III**  
**I. N. A.**  
**AND**  
**INTERNATIONAL LAW**

Let us consider the reason of the case.  
For nothing is Law that is not reason.  
--Sir John Powell. *Coggs v. Bernard*

# I. N. A. AND INTERNATIONAL LAW\*

## THE LAW OF ALLEGIANCE

The Indian National Army was the military wing of the Provisional Free Government of India. For a correct estimate of the status of the Indian National Army, we have to consider the position in which the Provisional Free Government of India stood in relation to International Law. Despite taboo on all news and discussions regarding the Provisional Free Government of India, we know that it acquired all the essential attributes of a state. The accepted notions of a state in Political Science are that a state must have a population, a territory, an organisation and sovereignty, both internal and external. T. J. Lawrence defines a state "as a political community, the members of which are bound together by the tie of common subjection to some central authority, whose commands the bulk of them habitually obey." Judged by this standard, the Provisional Free Government of India would seem to have been very well organised for discharging the essential functions of a state.

The Provisional Free Government of India came into existence under the auspices of the Japanese after their conquest by subjugation of Malaya and Burma. Its population consisted mainly of Indian civilians, abandoned by the head and the government of the former state who had fled leaving them at the mercy of the Japanese conquerors—and the Indian prisoners of war released by the Japanese. What was the status of these Indians when they rallied round the banner of the Free Government of India ?

To answer this question we have to consider how the national status of the Indian population was altered or affected by the conquest, annexation and subjugation of Burma and Malaya by the Imperial Government of Japan. Be it remembered that "nationality" in the context of International Law refers to the quality of being a subject of a certain state and, should not be confused with membership of a certain nation in the sense of race. On the effect of subjugation on nationality Oppenheim says : "Doctrine and practice agree that such enemy

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\* Originally published in Hindusthan Standard : Puja Annual : September, 1945.

subjects as are domiciled on the annexed territory and remain there after annexation become ipso facto by the subjugation subjects of the subjugating state". The cases of *Campbell vs. Hall* (1774), *I Cowper*, page 208, and *United States vs. Repentigny* (1866).<sup>\*</sup> 5 Wallace, page 211 are cited in support of the above contention. Oppenheim further opines that "validity of the subjugating states does not depend upon recognition on the part of the other powers. Nor is a mere protest of a third power of any legal weight." The subjugation of the Orange Free State and South African Republic by England are instances of such title by subjugation.

This statement of the law of subjugation makes clear how the subjugation by Japan gave rise to a conflict between the allegiance to the territorial sovereign in the person of Japan and to the personal supremacy of the British Crown. The annexation of these territories resolved this conflict in favour of the territorial sovereign, and, the Indian population, whether they liked it or not, became the citizens of the Imperial Government of Japan, and failure to grasp this reality has been productive of much bad blood between these Indian people and their former sovereign.\* The Imperial Government of Japan had

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**\* On Allegiance.**

Allegiance may either be perpetual or temporary. In the case of a subject by birth or naturalisation, the British Courts had for a long time upheld the doctrine of perpetual allegiance. The maxim "*Nemo potest exuere patriam*" made the allegiance of the subject co-extensive with his life. Thus, in *Blackstone's Commentaries* Vol. 1. Page 370, (First Edition) the law is summed up in the following words "It is a principle of universal law that the natural born subject of one prince cannot by any act of his own—no, not by swearing allegiance to another—put off or discharge his natural allegiance to the former, for the natural allegiance was intrinsic and primitive and antecedent to the other, and cannot be diverted without the concurrent act of that prince to whom it was first due."

The birth of the United States of America brought a change in this feudal conception of allegiance. In the Act of July 27, 1868, America openly disavowed the doctrine of "perpetual allegiance" and granted to its citizens the right to change their Nationality or to use the language of the Act "the right of expatriation." This attitude of America created conflicts of law and Britain's differences with the United States on this point threatened the peace of Europe and America. Gradually, Great Britain came to realise that her doctrine of indissoluble allegiance had become an anachronism, and, following the recommendations of a Royal Commission, the Naturalisation Act, 1870, 33 Vic. c. 14 was passed, recognising the capacity of the British subject to renounce his allegiance.

The scope of the Nationalisation Act, 1870, was subjected to a limitation by the decision of the King's Bench in the case of *R. V. Lynch* (1903) I. K. B. page 444. It was there decided that this Act could not confer on a British subject the right to become naturalised in an enemy's country during time of war, such naturalisation being a means to escape liability for treasonable acts. The decision in *R. V. Lynch* holds good, even to-day, in cases of alleged naturalisation of such citizens, who join the enemy while enjoying the protection of the government, allegiance to whom they seek to terminate by the Act of Naturalisation. In such cases, treasonable acts precede the Act of Naturalisation and the Naturalisation Act, having no retros-

power enough to employ these Indians against their erstwhile sovereign. In effect, for the time being, Japan controlled the destiny of these Indian people.

### AN INTERNATIONAL PERSON

It was at this juncture that Shri Subhas Chandra took up the organisation of Indians, and, in the language of Lord Zetland, "he is a man of wonderful organising abilities, almost a genius." It was Shri Subhas Chandra Bose who conceived the bold plan of organising these people into and under a Provisional Free Government of India after freeing them from the thralldom of Japan. His love for his people and his passion for freedom could not brook the idea of his people being employed in an imperialist war. He had the people mobilised under his personal leadership to prevent their exploitation by the Japanese authorities and then set up a Free Government and had the same recognised first by the Imperial Government of Japan, and, later on, by other Axis Powers. The conduct of the Provisional Free Government of India was not the conduct of a puppet government. It allowed no act of hostility to be committed by its subjects till it made a formal declaration of war as required by the third convention of the Second Hague Conference. By this declaration of war on Anglo-American Powers, the Provisional Free Government of India became an ally of the Axis and barring the limitations resulting from such an alliance, the Provisional Free Government of

pective effect, cannot render him immune from punishment for treasonable acts committed earlier.

The above decision does not govern a case, where the allegiance to the government is severed after the protection accorded to a citizen is either withdrawn or denied by the government concerned. The tie of allegiance was described by Lord Coke as '*duplex et reciprocum ligamen*,' involving the duty of obedience on the one hand and the duty of protection on the other. Instances of such withdrawal of protection can be found whenever the Sovereign cedes, separates or surrenders a portion of the Sovereign's dominions, and, in all such cases, in the eye of International Law, the resident inhabitants of the territory ceded, separated or conquered lose their former nationality, and become subjects of the new state. In the case of Isaacson V. Durant (1886) 55. L. J. Q. Bat page 339: 17 Q. B. D. page 52, it was declared that the allegiance to the King was due "in his politic, and not in his personal capacity", and, after the withdrawal of protection to which citizens are entitled as a matter of their political right, the political character is missed by the subjects concerned. The position would, however, be different when a portion of the territory is temporarily evacuated and not surrendered and the Sovereign owns his obligation to protect the inhabitants of the evacuated territory.

In any event, the doctrine of perpetual allegiance is to-day as dead as feudalism.

India was free to tackle its own external affairs. It may be pointed out that this Provisional Government lacked the quality of permanence which is an essential mark of a state. Even if we admit that the Provisional Free Government of India was not a sovereign state, it was at least an international person. As Lawrence puts it, "There are grades and degrees among the subjects of International Law. Besides sovereign states, part sovereign states and civilised belligerent communities not being states are also subjects of International Law. It would be pedantry to exclude it from the family of nations, because it is not wholly sovereign, just as it would be cruelty to exclude from the social family a half-brother, or half-sister, because a family is generally spoken of as a married pair and their offspring."

#### ITS INDEPENDENT CHARACTER

The claim of the Provisional Free Government of India to be recognised as an international person is greatly enhanced by the spirit of independence displayed by this Government in the tackling of most vital matters. Even in the determination of its war aims it exercised its free mind. The war declared by the Provisional Free Government of India was a war for the liberation of India as distinct from the imperialist war aims of Japan. Its attitude of neutrality towards China is another proof of its independence.

The recognition of the Provisional Free Government of India as an international person will at once entitle the men and women who had joined the I. N. A. to the treatment approved by international codes and covenants for the combatants and non-combatants of a defeated enemy country. Barring the British, the other members of the Allied nations will have no difficulty in according this recognition, following the well-established principles of the Law of Nation. But the mere vanity of past overlordship over Burma and Malaya so greatly blurs the vision of the British people to-day, that they refuse to see the simple fact that after their abrupt withdrawal from these territories and the subsequent annexation and subjugation of the countries by the Japanese, the nationality of the people had undergone a complete change, and, their allegiance, by implications of the International Law had shifted from the King-in-Parliament of England to the Emperor



of Japan. True that temporary withdrawal of the army and the Government does not absolve the subjects from the obligations of political allegiance, but the desire to continue as the sovereign must be made manifest to the subjects not merely through paper declarations, but through certain acts, aiming at preventing the exploitation of those subjects by the enemy for purposes of the war. Nothing is so far known as to what the British Government of Burma and Malaya did to secure a fair treatment for the Indian subjects in enemy hands.

The very first maxim of civilised political life is that there ought to be no obligation without a corresponding right. The duty of allegiance implies the right to the protection of the state. Even when in the hands of the enemy, a citizen is entitled to know the steps taken by the sovereign to secure for him the conditions of life guaranteed by International Conventions and Hague Regulations. In support of its claim of continued allegiance the British Government ought to make public what steps it had taken to discharge its primary and essential duties towards the Indian subjects in Malaya and Burma. It would be anything but British "fair-play" to write off these lakhs of Indians, once left by them to their own fate, as Quislings and traitors and to apply to them the rigours of Martial Law when the benefits and privileges attached to citizenship under the British Crown had to be denied to them for so long a time.

Lastly, even assuming that Burma and Malaya and other places which passed under the occupation of Japan had never passed out of the hands of the British sovereign and Japan's subjugation of these territories during the continuance of hostilities was not lawful subjugation, the men and women of the Indian National Army can yet claim to be treated as prisoners of war on the ground that they constituted what is known in International Law as "civilised belligerent communities to be recognised as International persons." Lawrence sums up the views of international jurists in the following words: "These communities have not received recognition as sovereign states; but their governments possess the essential attributes of sovereignty, and they desire admission into the family of nations. Why then, are they excluded from full membership? Because the fact of their sovereignty may be a temporary phenomenon. They

are endeavouring by war to cut themselves adrift from the state of which they form a part, and to set up a separate national existence of their own ; and while serious efforts are still being made for their subjection, the Government they have created may at any moment be overturned and they may relapse into their former condition of component portions of a larger political whole. Accordingly they are not recognised as independent states, while the struggle is proceeding with any semblance of vigour on the part of the mother country. But meanwhile they are levying armies, equipping cruisers, if the contest is maritime, and carrying on war in a regular and civilised fashion ; and those states which are brought into contact with their operations must decide whether to regard them as lawful or unauthorised. In a case such as we have supposed, there can be no doubt of the decision. War exists as a fact, and interested states must open their eyes to it. This they do by according to the incipient political community what is known as recognition of belligerency. The effect of their action is to endow the community with all the rights and all the obligations of an independent state so far as the war is concerned, but no further. Its armies are lawful belligerents, not banditti ; its ships of war are lawful cruisers, not pirates ; the supplies it takes from invaded territory are requisitions, not robbery ; and at sea its captures made in accordance with maritime law are good prize, and its blockades must be respected by neutrals." 'o

#### A CIVILISED BELLIGERENT COMMUNITY

The open declaration of war made by the Provisional Free Government of India, the raising of a well-equipped and disciplined army of men and women whose conduct was regulated by all well-recognised canons of modern warfare, the siege of Imphal and the battle of Kohima in which the members of the belligerent community fought not only against the British and British Indian forces, but also against the American forces, and the disciplined manner in which they ceased all acts of hostility at the instance of their High Command clearly entitle them to the recognition as a "civilised belligerent community not being states." The fact of American participation in the siege of Imphal and the battle of Kohima was highly significant and

made these hostile acts more than a mere rebellion. If it were a mere question of suppressing a few lakhs of Indian insurgents who had rebelled against their lawfully constituted sovereign, U. S. A. would have been neutral and the employment of American arms and resources would have been an unwarranted and an unprecedented act of intervention in the internal affairs of the British Empire. For aught that we know, the American forces had clear instructions from their home Government not to get mixed up with the internal politics of the British Empire. The military operations at Imphal and Kohima were conducted under the Allied command and were treated as part of the total war efforts of the Allied Powers. Having viewed the activities of the Indian National Army as the carrying on of an open war by belligerents in the suppression of which all the Allied Powers were interested, can the British Government now turn round and say that they were their internal matters and the rebels are to be dealt with by them alone according to the law of treason? Once a belligerent, always a belligerent in relation to the same war. If the men and women of the Indian National Army were belligerents, when their operations met with success and had to be quelled with the might of the Allied force, they retain the same character even now that they are vanquished. The question of their treatment after their defeat is a matter for the entire Allied Powers to consider and determine. Millions of Indian eyes are now turned to America and China to see if they would meekly acquiesce in this unsound claim of the British to treat these men and women of the Indian National Army as "traitors."

### LAW AND MORALITY

In the context of International Law, an appeal to moral principles is fortunately not irrelevant. Municipal Law might

#### \*Can Courts in India apply International Law?

International Law, according to Blackstone, is "adopted in its full extent by the Laws of England; whenever any question arises which is properly subject to its jurisdiction, it is held to be a part of the law of the land". As being a part of the common law of England, the law of nations is adopted by Indian Law, for it is well-settled, that the common Law of England, so far as it may be consistent with the Indian Law, should be applied by Courts in India. In the words of Theodone D. Woolsey, "As soon as a nation has assumed the obligations of International Law, they become a portion of the law of the land to govern the decisions of courts, the conduct of the rulers and that of the people. A nation is bound to protect this part of law by statute and penalty as much as that part which controls the Jural relations or in other ways affects the actions of individuals; Otherwise, it is a dead letter; there is a want of faith towards foreign powers, and there is danger of quarrel ending in war."

have drifted from morality. but International Law has gradually moved closer to International Morality. Lord Wavell, more than anybody else, knows what moral considerations arise in cases of those, who, without a warning, and at places, without any resistance whatsoever to the enemy, were left into the hands of an unfeeling Power, when, for safety and for strategic reasons all but they had fled from Malaya and Burma.

Lord Louis Mountbatten is reported to have resented the reference to the Burma National Army as "Burma Traitor Army" and, considering the unfortunate position in which they found themselves when the country was overrun by Japan, he feels inclined to condone their error of judgment. Cannot India expect Lord Wavell, who, as Field-Marshal Wavell, was in-charge of all operations in Malaya and Burma when the country was occupied by Japan, to make the same sympathetic and humane approach to the problem of the Indian National Army as Lord Louis Mountbatten has done in case of the Burma National Army? The present vindictive attitude of some towards the men and women of the Indian National Army can only spell disaster. In the words of Lawrence, "a ruler drunk with the consciousness of overwhelming power might venture to defy the moral sentiments of mankind, but only to discover by and by that outraged humanity avenges itself in unexpected ways."

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